



Friends of Sligo Creek

Newsletter June 2017



Ellen X. Silverberg photo

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June 4: Bike Ride for Clean Water & Water WatchDog Training

Participate in Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week, established last year by three states and DC, by joining Sligo's second Bike Ride for Clean Water or attending our next Water WatchDog training session, both taking place on Sunday, June 4.

Bikers will assemble in two groups, at 8 and 8:45 am, at the headwaters of Sligo, where Channing Drive meets Sligo Creek Park, near Arcola Elementary School. From there, two groups will bike (with a 45-minute gap between them) to Bladensburg Waterfront Park, with informative stops along way, arriving about 11 am. There, refreshments will welcome riders, who can then take a scenic pontoon boat ride on the Anacostia River. Register for the bike ride at this email address: bikeride. More details about this event are at this website: [Bike Ride](#)



The first Sligo bike ride in 2016 enters the powerline meadow.



Richard Klein, of Community and Environmental Defense Services, will help lead the Water WatchDog training June 4.

If you're interested in learning about water quality monitoring from two experts, attend our next Water WatchDog training session from 9-11 am on June 4 at Bladensburg Waterfront Park classroom, located at 4601 Annapolis Road. Lori Lilly and Richard Klein will lead indoor sessions and visit sites along the Anacostia River. Register and receive more information at avorce@gmail.com

Both events are made possible by a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust through the Water Quality Protection Charge Program of the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection.

Wildflower Walk in Powerline

Meadow June 10



Blue toad-flax blooming in the powerline meadow in May 2017 (Wilpers photo)

Spend an early summer afternoon in the wilds of the powerline meadow as we look for wildflowers on Sat, June 10, from 4 to 5 pm. We can add an optional 30 minutes if anyone wants to continue exploring.

We will meet where 16th Place dead-ends at the Pepco corridor. The address (for GPS purposes) is 7150 16th Place, Hyattsville, MD 20783. You can park on the street or in the large parking lot that serves the nearby church.

The powerline meadow stretches northeast from the Sligo hiker-biker trail toward Riggs Road.

We'll look for natives like Blue-eyed Grass, Hemp Dogbane, fleabanes, Butterfly Weed, and Tall Blackberry, as well as Blue-flag Iris (in wet areas) and the low-lying yellow flowers of Common Cinquefoil.

With luck, we'll spot many butterflies and bees visiting these flowers and

others.

Our leader will be Michael Wilpers, who received his certificate in natural history field studies in 2010 from the Audubon Naturalist Society. He also conducted, with Bruce Sidwell, our 2013 survey of 120 flowering plants in the meadow (see results at this [web page](#)). Please RSVP to naturalhistory@fosc.org so we have an idea of how many to expect.

Rachel Carson Talk July 11

Learn how environmental pioneer Rachel Carson promoted conservation from within the federal government during her sixteen years at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service when historian Mark



*Rachel Carson in 1940
(US Fish and Wildlife Service photo)*

Commerce Department, which merged with the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Interior Department in 1940, midway through her career there. Carson lived in four different homes in the Sligo watershed from 1936-1949, most of her time as a federal employee.

As a writer, naturalist, and scientist for the government, Carson became expert at translating scientific research for the general public through government brochures and free-lance pieces she wrote for the *Baltimore Sun*, *Colliers*, and the *Atlantic* magazine.

She met with researchers at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center who were already working on the effects of DDT in 1944. Two years later, she launched the booklet series "Conservation in Action," which enabled her to travel the country and meet the leading field biologists of the day. They introduced her to swirling debates about the wisdom of widespread controls then used against predators and rodents, insights that later informed her 1962 classic, *Silent Spring*.

Madison gives a talk for Friends of Sligo Creek on Tuesday, July 11.

For most of Carson's time in government, she lived in the Sligo watershed. (See our web feature [here](#).)

Mark Madison's presentation, "Rachel Carson: Nature's Bureaucrat— How to Change the World from within the Federal Government," takes place at the Silver Spring Civic Building, on Ellsworth Drive between Fenton and Cedar, beginning at 7:30 pm. Come at 7:15 for refreshments and to socialize.

From 1936 (when she was 29) until 1952, Carson worked full-time for the Bureau of Fisheries within the



*Historian Mark Madison at Aldo Leopold's
farmhouse in Wisconsin*

Mark Madison has been historian for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service since

1999. He manages the museum and archives, which house half a million objects, including Rachel Carson's personal library, her typewriter, and her magnifying glass, among other treasures. Before joining Fish and Wildlife, Mark taught at the University of Melbourne (Australia) and Harvard University and spent three years doing tropical reforestation as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Philippines.

For further information on this event, email naturalhistory@fosc.org.

La primera Caminata en Español en Sligo Creek Park

Gracias a todos ustedes por venir a la primera Caminata en Español en Sligo Creek Park. Delia Aguilar - quien esta traduciendo este mensaje de agradecimiento para hacerlo correctamente - y yo, por la Junta de Directores de los Amigos de Sligo Creek, estamos deleitados de empezar el proceso de hacer alcance a la comunidad del area de habla hispana la cual es importante y significativa, este es su parque tambien y nosotros queremos mejorar y expandir nuestra asociacion con la comunidad Hispana.

Estamos muy agradecidos a Jorge Bogantes Montero por liderar el paseo y compartir su conocimiento y el amor por la naturaleza. Estamos seguros que usted comparte nuestra apreciacion del parque y los animales y plantas y nuestro deseo para cuidar de ellos e incrementar la cantidad de gente que aprecien nuestro parque.



Jorge Montero discusses water-quality monitoring devices in Sligo that are connected to devices in the white box run by the US Geological Survey. (K Kage photo)

Si usted u otros que usted conozca este interesado en participar en un grupo

para hacer alcance con la comunidad Latina, por favor nos deja saber. Nosotros hemos empezado este esfuerzo pero necesitamos mas voces e ideas de como lo podemos hacer mejor.

Adjunto esta el mapa en Espanol del Sligo Watershed, como fue prometido. Muchas gracias nuevamente por acompanarnos.

Birders Find 32 Species in Sligo Outing



American Redstart photographed by Won-ok Kim during the Sligo outing

On an overcast morning in early May, Sligo's spring bird outing netted thirty-one species. Local experts David Blockstein and Mary Singer led a group of 18 that started in the area near the intersection of Sligo Creek Parkway and Dallas Avenue and proceeded to the soccer fields and back.

Almost all of the species were seen, but a few were noticed only by their songs: Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Parula, and Great Crested Flycatcher

The group was probably most excited to see a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, which came quite close and stuck around for everyone to get a good view.

The outing got off to a good start with a quick sighting of a Scarlet Tanager high up in the trees. Flocks of Cedar Waxwings flew overhead, another impressive sighting.

Blogger Christopher Lancette joined the walk and wrote that "the Friends of Sligo Creek introduced me to a whole new way of encountering the trail . . . The sounds were what I found the most fascinating. It was like they had all been hidden from my ears until ornithologist David Blockstein and local birder Mary Singer pulled back some kind of magic curtain . . ."

"Friends of Sligo Creek," he wrote, "had inspired me to spend more time with my head in the trees above. I gave thanks to the Friends of Sligo Creek the whole way home for the new gift it has given me to treasure." Read his full blog-post here: [DC Reflections](#).

David gave the group a nice summary of the threat that Brown-headed Cowbirds pose to warblers and other nesting



*Participants in the outing consult a field guide.
(C. Lancette photo)*

birds. That elicited some comments about nature being a tough place to raise a nestling.

Several attendees were quite impressed by the migratory prowess of some of these little birds, coming all the way from South America.

Here is the complete list of species observed: Scarlet Tanager, Red-bellied Woodpecker, American Redstart, Red-eyed Vireo, Cedar Waxwing, Chimney Swift, Turkey Vulture,

Gray Catbird, Swainson's Thrush, European Starling, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Robin, Mourning Dove, American Goldfinch, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Baltimore Oriole, Northern Cardinal, American Crow, Indigo Bunting, Carolina Chickadee, House Wren, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Parula, Brown-headed Cowbird, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Common Grackle, Eastern Phoebe, Barn Swallow, Great-crested Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, and Mallard.

Thanks to Ross Campbell for organizing and reporting on this great outing.



Birding group spots something in Sligo. (R Campbell photo)

Need to Reach Us?

President (Corinne Stephens): president@fosc.org

Invasive Plants (Jim Anderson): invasives@fosc.org

Litter (Patton Stephens): litter@fosc.org

Advocacy (Kit Gage): advocacy@fosc.org

Natural History (Bruce Sidwell): naturalhistory@fosc.org

Stormwater (Elaine Lamirande): stormwater@fosc.org

Water Quality (Pat Ratkowski): waterquality@fosc.org

Outreach (Sarah Jane Marcus): outreach@fosc.org

Treasurer (Dee Clarkin; asstnt treasurer Sherrell Goggin): treasurer@fosc.org

Webmaster (Sherrell Goggin): webmaster@fosc.org

Newsletter Editor (Michael Wilpers): editor@fosc.org



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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.