



Friends of Sligo Creek

Newsletter October 2017



Ellen X. Silverberg photo

Contents

Next Meadow Planting Nov 2

Fall "Sweep" Draws 400 Volunteers

Buy a FOSC Window Sticker!

Trash Update from Alice Ferguson Foundation

Need to Reach Us?

Next Meadow Planting Is Nov 2

Help bring the new Sligo meadow to even greater life at the next planting on Thursday, November 2, from 11 am to 1 pm. Montgomery Parks will provide about 300 seedlings of native grasses and wildflowers to augment the nearly 1,000 plants that were put in during the first three plantings.

The meadow is located between the creek and the parkway just south of the Beltway and across from the golf course.

Please RSVP to Tenley Wurglitz at Montgomery Parks if you plan to help. Her email is tenley.wurglitz@montgomeryparks.org.



Plant ecologist Carole Bergmann of Montgomery Parks discusses the new meadow in Sligo on September 13. (Wilpers photo)

On September 13, plant ecologist Carole Bergmann of Montgomery Parks gave an evening tour of the meadow for about 20 neighbors. She pointed out some of the natives taking root, including *Eupatorium serotinum* (boneset), which deer don't eat; *Eupatorium hyssopifolium* (narrow-leaved boneset); the small aster *Symphotrichum pilosum*; common milkweed; a wild lettuce; three goldenrod species; brown-eyed Susan; purple vervain; hoary mountain mint; and the very hearty wingstem (a tall sunflower).

The meadow will be mown once a year, in late winter, to mimic the long-lost effect of large grazing mammals, who maintained meadow-grassland habitats in our region until shortly after the end of the last Ice Age.

For the planting day, please wear long pants, long sleeves, and sturdy, closed-toed shoes. Bring gloves, trowels, and shovels if you have them, but Parks will provide them if you don't have your own. The planting goes ahead in light rain, but it will be rescheduled in a heavy downpour.

This workday is pre-approved for Student Service Learning (SSL) hours with Montgomery County Schools.

For further information, email naturalhistory@fosc.org.

Nearly 400 Volunteers Collect Trash and Recyclables at Fall Sweep



Elenoff family in section between Piney Branch and Wayne (Kasovic photo)

It is such a pleasure to see so many volunteers join to "Sweep" our creek twice a year.

When volunteers spread out along the park (and balance on stones to get that last piece), one can't help but notice the enjoyment in the air. The peacefulness of the flowing water and swaying trees is contagious.

This year was particularly joyful, as nearly 400 volunteers enjoyed near-perfect weather, including crisp, non-humid air on both days.

At the same time, the nagging trash remains. This time around, Sweep volunteers collected about 200 bags of trash and 75 bags of recycling. While we are

always grateful that the trash is removed, we are reminded of the ongoing need to work together to reduce the amount of trash that enters the creek in the first place.

That's where the children come in! We send a huge thanks to the many parents, troop leaders, and other adults who brought kids and young adults for the Sweep. We had multiple Scout troops and some middle school and college students join in, as well as a church group. How better to build awareness of the creek's value among the next generation?

It is quite exciting that our number one growing request for supplies is "children's gloves," and my number one piece of advice to section leaders who have scout troops joining: "Take lots of bags, the people will come!"



Daisy Troop 34039 between Piney Branch and Wayne (Kasovic)

We've had much recent activity among our adults, too. New Sweep leaders recently joined in Section 1 (East-West Hwy to New Hampshire) and Section 2 (New Hampshire to Maple), having been recruited and shown the ropes by more seasoned section leads who served in that role for many years. A warm hello and goodbye to each, and "thank you." We also had several substitute section leaders this sweep, a role that is not as easy to pull off as it might look.

Spending time looking more closely in the creek inevitably results in finding some unusual items. During this Sweep, Cub Scouts in Section 2 (New Hampshire to Maple) found a nearly perfect male deer skull, with antlers and teeth dramatically intact. Such a remarkable find is vivid evidence of our park's natural place in the scheme of things: the comings and goings, the home-making and taking rest, and yes, the living and dying. In contrast, finds this Sweep such as the rusty metal fencing, a tarp, mattresses, shopping carts, 50 beer bottles heaped in a pile, and three big orange traffic barrels seem even more out of place.

Running the Sweep the Creek is a great collaborative effort. We send special thanks to our friends at Montgomery Parks, who advertise the event, provide our gloves and bags, pick up the filled trash bags, take photos, and serve as our sponsoring organization for awarding SSL hours. We also rely on our own FOSC outreach team that promotes the Sweeps through

email, our kiosks, and our newsletter; our webmaster; our database manager; and our photographers.

But we need more help! Here are some specific roles that need filling before our next Sweep in the spring:

- Someone to take the Sweep banner designs to the printer and deliver them to Montgomery Parks (2-3 hours)
- Sweep leader for Section 8 (between Dennis and University Avenues; 4-5 hours)
- People to staff the tables where we hand out gloves and bags (3 hours)



Beautiful deer skull found by Cub Scouts between New Hampshire and Maple during the fall Sweep

Please contact me at litter@fosc.org to volunteer for any of these opportunities. Thank you again for your partnership in preserving and enjoying Sligo Creek. No effort is too small, and none goes unnoticed.

Patton Stephens
Sweep the Creek Coordinator

Promote FOSC with Our New Window Stickers

You can now decorate your car or house windows with removable stickers promoting Friends of Sligo Creek.

For a mere \$5.00 at one of our upcoming programs (or at an outside event where we staff a booth), you can walk away with our gorgeous logo. With a donation of \$50, FOSC president Corinne Stephens will formally present you with the sticker as a public thanks for your generosity. Should you up your donation to \$100



or more, we will provide you with the sticker and an official FOSC mug, which cannot be purchased!

If you'd like more information about these new FOSC "clings," please email president@fosc.org.

Get your own removable FOSC window decal at our next program. (Stephens photo)

Trash Update from Alice Ferguson Foundation



Hannah Seligmann speaks at FOSC program on September 19. (Murtagh photo)

Attendees learned a great deal about the state of litter management in the Anacostia watershed when Hannah Seligmann of the Alice Ferguson Foundation (AFF) spoke at our event September 19.

Hannah works at the AFF office in Accokeek, MD. Trash reduction is one of the three missions of the Foundation and Hannah's focus. The Foundation's framework for reducing trash involves education, regulation, enforcement, market-based approaches and policy, working with area jurisdictions.

Community trash cleanups like Friends of Sligo Creek's Sweep the Creek help achieve the AFF's trash reduction mission. These cleanups, she said, encourage a

public ethic of environmental stewardship. Cleanups sometimes are residents' first introduction to parks and natural environments close at hand. When volunteers provide data about the trash types collected, it can be analyzed and used to guide decision making.

One type of regulation she described is the Anacostia Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). It sets limits on pollution in waterways from chemicals, sediment, and trash and was approved in 2010 by the Environmental Protection Agency as part of the federally mandated Chesapeake Bay cleanup plan. Since Sligo is part of the Anacostia watershed, this TMDL covers Sligo and its tributaries.

As Hannah explained, the Anacostia TMDL requires jurisdictions to remove a specified amount of trash from Anacostia watershed streams. It obligates Montgomery County and Takoma Park, for example, to collectively remove an average of 22 lbs of trash per day from Sligo Creek. As part of the District of Columbia's obligations under the TMDL, DC Water recently launched two boats (called Flotsam and Jetsam) to skim trash from the Anacostia River.

While Hannah did not mention these explicitly, the objectives laid out in the Anacostia TMDL are to significantly increase funding for trash reduction programs; create and enhance regional partnerships and coordination at all levels; improve awareness, knowledge, and behavior relating to littering and illegal dumping; promote trash-reduction technologies and approaches; improve laws to reduce trash; and increase trash monitoring.

In response to a question, we learned that money raised through Montgomery County's plastic bag fee go into its Water Quality Protection Charge fund. This fund covers, among other things, Henry Coppola's position as Stream and Park Cleanup Coordinator with Montgomery Parks.

Hannah also pointed out that street sweeping is an underappreciated tool in the trash reduction strategy. While it may not garner the attention of Baltimore Harbor's famous Mr. Trash Wheel, street sweeping prevents far more trash from entering the streams.

-- Mike Smith
FOSC Board Member

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



Find us on Facebook!



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.