



# Friends of Sligo Creek

Newsletter

December 2020



*Photo by Ellen X. Silverberg*

## What's in the Creek Water? Zoom Talk Dec. 14

Join the Water Quality Committee for a public online meeting to learn what's in our creek waters, how we're monitoring the stream, and what you can do to report and solve problems.

The meeting will be held on Zoom, Monday, December 14, from 7:30 to 8:30 pm. Use this link to join the meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86317531675>



*Eastern Mosquito Fish near Forest Glen by Ron Wertz*

Members of the committee will give updates on the state of Sligo Creek's

water, including issues of concern such as microplastics, sediment pollution, and bacteria loads in the creek.

We'll also talk about our citizen-powered Water Watchdogs program and recent storm events in the area. And then we'll open things up for questions, observations, and suggestions regarding FOSC's water quality program.

Please join us to catch up on the water quality of Sligo Creek and share your concerns and interests. We hope to see you on the Zoom call on Monday December 14, beginning at 7:30 pm.

-- Water Quality Committee ([waterquality@fosc.org](mailto:waterquality@fosc.org))

To join FOSC, visit this "[Get Involved](#)" page of the website. Your name will automatically be added to the newsletter mailing list.

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## Public Meeting on Wheaton Branch Projects Dec. 16

Learn about upcoming work along Wheaton Branch at Dennis Avenue during a virtual meeting hosted by county Department of Transportation (DOT) and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on Wednesday, December 16, at 6:30 pm.

Two major topics will be addressed: A flood mitigation project upstream from Dennis, as well as dredging of a stormwater pond, will be discussed by staff from DEP, while DOT staff will discuss the replacement of the Dennis Ave. bridge over Wheaton Branch.

To register for the event, use this [registration form link](#). You will then receive the Zoom link for the event itself.

Speakers at the meeting will describe the scope of both projects, a preliminary design for the new bridge, flood mitigation plans, costs, schedules, and traffic movement during construction. Both departments also seek community input and want to answer questions during this meeting.

For some background on the flood mitigation issues, look at this wonderful new video created by FOSC's own Ed Murtagh:

[Video: Proposed Wheaton Branch Flood Mitigation Project](#)



*Artist's rendering of the completed project, showing Wheaton Branch, looking north over Dennis Avenue, with flood prevention earth works on either side of the stream and the "open space" option for vegetation (DEP image)*

The county's announcement notes that the existing Dennis Avenue bridge, built in 1961, is "in poor condition and is in need of replacement." In addition, the announcement says that houses along Glenhaven Drive, Dennis Avenue, and nearby streets "frequently experience flooding." For more information, see the project webpages:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/projects/dennisave/index.html>  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/water/stormwater/major-projects.html>

A recording of the presentation (in English and Spanish) and the slides will be placed online on the DOT and DEP websites.

You can provide written comments on the plans through Friday, January 15, 2021, by using the online comment form ([click here](#)) or see the DOT project webpage or email the DOT project manager at [greg.hwang@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:greg.hwang@montgomerycountymd.gov).

-- Editor ([editor@fosc.org](mailto:editor@fosc.org))

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## **"Leave the Leaves" Draws a Crowd**

Our online program, "Leave the Leaves," cosponsored by FOSC and Takoma Horticultural Club, drew an impressive crowd of nearly 100 viewers as we shared information about how to avoid removing fallen leaves from yards and gardens and why this is important.

The City of Takoma Park taped a



short video of Kit Gage (right) demonstrating some ways to do so, and Daryl Braithwaite of TP Public Works noted the City's limited resources to remove them this year.

If you missed the event, here's a link to the full video:

<https://youtu.be/i7wWOwSgOMg>

Leaves on the ground (in the garden or unmowed areas) provide shelter and food for many species -- moths, butterflies, other insects and small mammals and birds.

On your lawn, you can mow the leaves there into smaller bits that serve as fertilizer and protect bare spots. Shredded leaves can also be used to help compost food waste. It's cheaper, easier, less disease importation, and better for the environment.

-- Kit Gage ([advocacy@fosc.org](mailto:advocacy@fosc.org))

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## Give for Sligo During the Holidays

Sligo Creek connects us. The rain we see outside our windows can gather in Sligo and pass through to the Northwest Branch, Anacostia, Potomac, Chesapeake, and Atlantic. It connects Wheaton to Hyattsville, Montgomery to Prince George's to Washington, D.C.

The varying murmurs and roars of the Creek, the raindrops glistening on oak, poplar, maple, and sycamore leaves offer opportunities for reverie and reflection, comfort and respite.

Friends of Sligo Creek aims to be the protector of Sligo Creek. We do this by measures including consistently advocating for Sligo-friendly practices to public officials and the community; creating a Sligo-focused web page as a community resource, including observations about local fauna and flora; removing of non-native, invasive plants in Sligo Creek Park; performing regular water quality monitoring and reporting of illegal pollution; holding Zoom program meetings such as our forthcoming December 14th meeting on Sligo Creek water quality; and promoting efforts to reduce litter including stream cleanups.

We are looking forward to a return to in-person events such as nature walks, program meetings, and group outdoor activities when conditions allow.

Please help support Friends of Sligo Creek's efforts by making a donation. You

can donate easily and securely **via the Donate tab of the FOSC website** or use the button below:

**DONATE TO FOSC  
NOW**

You can also donate by check. Our mailing address is:  
FOSC, P.O. Box 11572, Takoma Park, MD 20913

Best wishes for the holiday season and a happy 2021,

Mike Smith  
President, Friends of Sligo Creek



*Snowy Sligo (M. Wilpers photo)*

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## **Local Jewelry Artist Designs with Sligo Glass**

Local jewelry artist Lauren Reynolds (left) recently sent a check to FOSC from the sales of her jewelry made from recycled glass found in Sligo. Thank you, Lauren!

We're applying Lauren's gift toward the costs of the email service we use to design and distribute the monthly newsletter.

"I'm forever collecting bits of this and that," Lauren wrote, "and using them



to fulfill a lifelong desire to create new things from old. I'm the kind of person who picks up old furniture from your curb, brings home sections of the tree you just cut down, and buys all the old ceramics from your garage sale; who will never, ever turn her basement into a guest room, because that's where I store all my treasures. I'm an artist, junk collector, and jack-of-all-trades. Making art is my happy place, and I'm always on the lookout to add to my happy-making supplies.

"My kids and dog and I have been walking along the creek a lot since we moved here three and half years ago, and I've noticed that Sligo Creek has a lot of cool tumbled glass pieces

on its bank. There's even more not-so-tumbled glass that just needs a little smoothing, so I started to collect it during my walks. I bring it home to my rock tumbler (because of course I have a rock tumbler).

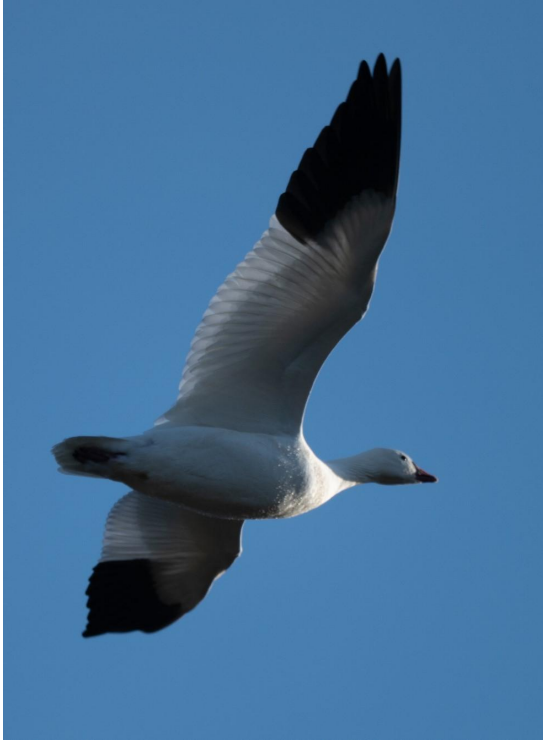
"If you throw it in with a bit of creek sand and salt and let it tumble for a few days, the resulting glass pieces are beautifully silky and elegant and just begging to be jewelry. Then I break out my jeweler's tools (because of course I have jeweler's tools) and set to work. The results are in my Etsy shop. It's really feeding my creative soul, and I'm so pleased to be able to give the profits to FOSC and give back to the creek that gives me its treasure for free."

– Christine Dunathan ([webmaster@fosc.org](mailto:webmaster@fosc.org))

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## Nature Sightings in November





A rarity for Sligo: A Ross's Goose on Nov. 19 (left), spotted by Stephen Davies at the Wheaton Branch Ponds. Also seen by Stephen there: on Nov. 9, a Red Fox Sparrow, a fall/winter visitor to our area.



Grasshopper in the Syrbula genus (left) in the powerline meadow Nov. 27 by Kristin Zimmer. An unusual melanistic Grey Squirrel (with red belly) or possible Fox Squirrel on Nov. 19 by Ron Wertz near Hayes and Dennis.



Red-tailed hawks at the intersection of Georgia Ave. and the Beltway Nov. 4 (left, by anonymous) and at the Wheaton Branch ponds Nov. 26 by Jenny Glenn.



Osage Orange fruit (left) at the Wheaton Branch ponds on Nov. 13 by Ron Wertz. Margined Calligrapher on Nov. 4 by Katja Schulz near Montgomery College.





Marbled Orbweaver (above) on Dec. 1 by anonymous near Flower and the Parkway. Salt Marsh Moth (right) in the powerline meadow on Nov. 2 by Kristin Zimmer.



Velvet Foot mushroom (left) on Nov. 13 in the powerline meadow by Kristin Zimmer. Witches' Butter (a jelly fungus, above) by anonymous on Nov. 16 near Hilltop and Mississippi.





Buckeyes on Nov. 3 and Maryland Golden-aster on Nov. 15, both in the powerline meadow by Kristin Zimmer



Left: Red Swamp Crayfish (native to the Deep South, invasive in Maryland) caught by a Great Blue Heron on Nov. 29 at the Beltway ponds. Above: The heron just before swallowing the crayfish. Both photos by Dan Treadwell.

All photos, dates, locations, and names taken from the iNaturalist "project" titled "Fauna and Flora of the Sligo Creek Watershed."

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/fauna-and-flora-of-the-sligo-creek-watershed>

## Support FOSC

**We rely on your donations in order to monitor, measure, report, plan, and advocate for the Creek and its wildlife.**

**Donate**





## Need to Reach Us?

President (Mike Smith): [president@fosc.org](mailto:president@fosc.org)

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

Litter (Patton Stephens): [litter@fosc.org](mailto:litter@fosc.org)

Advocacy (Kit Gage): [advocacy@fosc.org](mailto:advocacy@fosc.org)

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

Stormwater (Elaine Lamirande): [stormwater@fosc.org](mailto:stormwater@fosc.org)

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

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

Treasurer (Dee Clarkin): [treasurer@fosc.org](mailto:treasurer@fosc.org)

Webmaster (Christine Dunathan): [webmaster@fosc.org](mailto:webmaster@fosc.org)

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

**Join FOSC**