



Friends of Sligo Creek

Newsletter May 2022



Photo by Ellen X. Silverberg

Bird Outings May 14 and 15



Bird enthusiasts at our outing in May 2017 (R. Campbell photo)

Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day with outings on May 14 and 15 to look for the many colorful birds who pass through on their way north, as well as those who are arriving to nest and breed in Sligo.

The first outing takes place on Saturday, May 14, at a location to be announced between Colesville Road and Dennis Avenue.

The second takes place on Sunday, May 15, in the powerline meadow between New Hampshire Avenue and East-West Highway.

Saturday, May 14

Ornithologist David Blockstein and local birder Mary Singer lead the walk on May 14 at 8 am. The location will be provided to the **first 20 people who RSVP** to this email [address](#). The outing is intended for adults and older teens. In the case of iffy weather, all registrants will get an email update that day by 7 am.

Sunday, May 15

The outing on May 15 at 8 am is led by local birder John Stith and neighborhood naturalist Kristin Zimmer. This walk is family-friendly and no RSVPs are required. It begins at the deadend where Drexel Street becomes 15th Avenue at the top of a paved trail into Sligo Creek Park. The event will proceed in a drizzle but will be cancelled in the case of heavy rain. For more information, email this [address](#).



Warblers photographed in Sligo in mid-May 2021

Left to right: Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat (photos by S. Davies)

David Blockstein, co-leading on May 14, is a Sligo resident and a longtime FOSC member. He is a senior adviser with the Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences. Joining him will be Mary Singer, who has lived in the Sligo watershed for fourteen years and is a member of the Maryland Ornithological Society. She has birded in the American South, on the West Coast, and in Africa and Central and South America.

John Stith, co-leading on May 15, is active on eBird and has contributed most of the 74 species observed so far in the powerline meadow, including American Kestrel, Brown Thrasher, Indigo Bunting, and Field Sparrow. He will be joined by Kristin Zimmer, who is the main force in Carole Highlands behind efforts to manage the powerline corridor as meadow and engage the community in enjoying and maintaining the meadow. She has recorded 263 plant and animal species in the meadow on iNaturalist.



Attendees at our May 2018 bird outing (Ross Campbell photo)

Volunteer to Monitor Sligo Water Quality with Anacostia Riverkeeper



Join our team of water quality monitors as we help Anacostia Riverkeeper track important parameters in the waters of Sligo Creek and Long Branch this spring and summer. Online training for new volunteers is May 5 and 20.

This program samples creek water every other week at 19 sites across the Anacostia watershed, three of which are located in Sligo Creek and one in Long Branch. Last year's testing in Sligo (see the [report](#)) revealed high levels of bacteria, which presents risks to humans, even while parameters for aquatic wildlife were fairly healthy.

Water quality testing in Sligo during the Anacostia Riverkeeper program in 2021 (R.O'Donnell photo)

Sampling is done twice a month, from late May through the end of September. The sites are located just upstream and downstream of Wayne Avenue in Sligo, near Maple Avenue in Sligo, and near Rolling Terrace Elementary School in Long Branch. Each test takes about 15 minutes.

Volunteers choose which sites and weeks they volunteer. Some go out just once while others monitor throughout the summer. There is plenty of flexibility to work around summer camps and vacations. If enough people sign up, they can split up duties (one person picks up the kit, everyone samples together, and another person drops off the kit).

If you are new to this work, you'll need to complete **online training on either Thursday, May 5, or Friday, May 20, at 10 am**. Register for the training on this [Eventbrite link](#). If you've participated before, you should have heard directly from Anacostia Riverkeeper about getting recertified. If not, contact them at this [email address](#).

Each site will be tested every other Wednesday (with Thursday as the rain date) and supplies are distributed that morning, 8 to 10 am, at either a home address in Silver Spring (to be provided to registrants) or at Takoma Piney Branch Park (behind Piney Branch Elementary School).

With supplies in hand, you head out to record water temperature, air temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, and turbidity and collect water samples to be analyzed for bacteria at the Anacostia Riverkeeper lab. Do not worry if these terms are unfamiliar. All of them will be taught in the training.

Anyone 18 or older can participate. (Younger children can do so under the supervision of a parent or guardian.) The data gathered from this program help FOSC, Anacostia Riverkeeper, Montgomery Parks, and state and local agencies learn more about the chemical and biological health of Sligo and Long Branch waters. This effort is a joint project of Anacostia Riverkeeper, the Chesapeake Bay Trust, Montgomery County Department of the Environment, Friends of Sligo Creek, and Neighbors of the Northwest Branch.

For questions or more information, contact waterquality@fosc.org or monitor@anacostiariverkeeper.org.



Takoma Stormwater Solutions Holds Webinar on May 10



Hear from Takoma Park experts and advocates in stormwater management when they address the current challenges and future needs to control rainfall runoff and prevent flooding.

Join the webinar on Tuesday, May 10, from 12 noon to 1:30 pm at this [Zoom link](#). If needed, the meeting ID is 869 8135 3858 and the passcode is 269011.

Flooding along Sligo Creek Parkway in September 2020 (Naomi Edelson photo)

The panel will look at the results of a 2022 survey of Takoma Park residents that found hundreds of homeowners who experienced flooding in recent years. Some of them spent upwards of \$20,000 on repairs. The webinar will examine recent climate change simulations that predict significant increases in local flooding in coming years. One of the simulations was carried out for Montgomery County and another for the Maryland Department of the Environment. The panel will also look at the assessments of future risks by homeowner insurance companies.



*Flooding on Takoma Park streets
in September 2020
(photos provided by TSS)*

The webinar is organized by the Takoma Stormwater Solutions (TSS), with cosponsorship by Friends of Sligo Creek, and features Paul Chrostowski (environmental engineer and FOSC board member), Byrne Kelly (landscape architect), Rob Valente (co-chair of the B.F. Gilbert Citizens Association) and

Stephen Whitney (FOSC stormwater committee and former member of the city's Committee on the Environment).

Moderating the discussion is Philip Bogdonoff, co-founder of the Washington, DC, chapter of Biodiversity for a Livable Climate. Takoma Park Mayor Kate Stewart will also speak.

Some approaches to dealing with increased flooding that are being tried elsewhere include underground reservoirs with metered discharge, filtration for purification before discharge, injection into deep aquifers, increasing the capacity of soils to store water, and planting of hybrid trees that are optimized for water uptake.

For more information about this event, email Takoma Stormwater Solutions at takomastormwater@gmail.com.

Spring "Sweep" Draws 300+ Volunteers



Thanks to everyone who participated in our Spring 2022 "Sweep the Creek" on April 23 and 24!

Well over 300 people came out to help over the weekend, while others participated in earlier cleanups in the park. We collected over 150 bags of trash and recyclables over the "Sweep" weekend.

Thanks to all the many teams and groups that came out, including Cub Scout Packs 8 and 209, Sligo Middle School students and staff, Daisy Troop 34100, Girl Scout Troop 34100, Team Max Socol for MD Senate, and Christ Congregational Church.

Above: Young volunteers and helper between Wayne & Colesville (Becky Reeve photo)

We also appreciate Victor Ramirez, who organized a group of high school students from Prince George's County to help out between New Hampshire Avenue and East-West Highway.

If you took photos during the Sweep, please send them to either litter@fosc.org or webmaster@fosc.org so we can post them on the website and

social media. See also our YouTube [video](#) celebrating 20 years of "Sweep the Creek."

Right: Dedicated heavy-lifters in Long Branch below Carroll Ave (David Reed photo)



At Hillwood Manor: Left: A successful family with their haul. Right: Walter and Susan Ewing with Victor Ramirez

At least three volunteers at this spring's Sweep celebrated their twentieth year of participating: Ross Campbell, Ed Murtagh, and Bruce Sidwell.

This Sweep was organized by the Sligo Stewards, under the leadership of our Sligo Stewards Coordinator Ed Murtagh. To provide feedback or ask questions, email litter@fosc.org.



Sweep Coordinator Ed Murtagh (far left) with Max Socol's group at Sligo-Dennis Avenue Park

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Nature Photos from Sligo

A selection of recent observations from the iNaturalist public project titled "Fauna and Flora of the Sligo Creek Watershed"

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

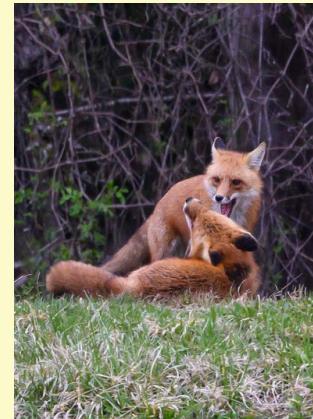
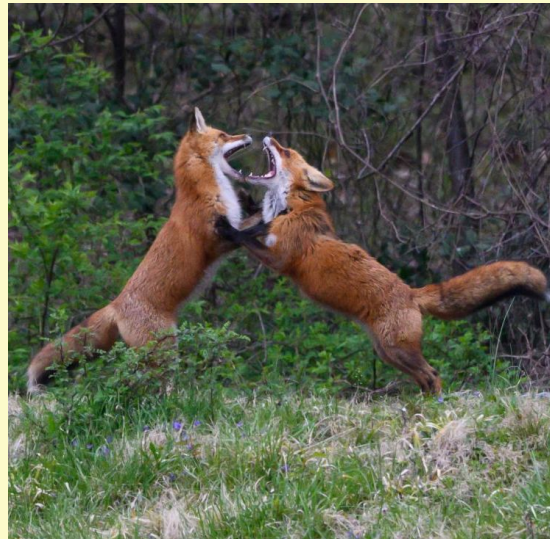
Photographers' names are those provided to iNaturalist.

Send comments or questions to Michael Wilpers vianaturalhistory@fosc.org.



More Rites of Spring

Above: Northern Watersnakes mating along Sligo Creek near Crosby Rd. on April 23 (Hugh Rand)
Below: Adult male and female Red Foxes near the Wheaton Branch ponds on April 12 (Stephen Davies)



Above: Canada Goose nest with eggs at Wheaton Branch ponds April 18 (S. Davies)

Right: Sap flies (Aulacigaster neoleucopeza) at Lee Jordan Field on April 18 (Katja Schulz)





Pinxter Flower (wild azalea) along the Parkway near Maple Avenue on April 22 (M. Wilpers)



Wild Geranium in Carole Highlands on April 23 (K. Zimmer)



Great Egret with fish catch at the Wheaton Branch ponds on April 21 (S. Davies)



Left: Painted Lady near Long Branch Parkway and East Wayne on April 23 (brcevans)

Above: Bold Jumping Spider near Flower and Erie on April 23 (rhoads)



Above left: Eastern Red-backed Salamander near Dennis and Hayes on April 23 (R. Wertz)

Above right: Common Snapping Turtle at the Forest Glen wetland on April 23 (Dan Treadwell)



Above: Wild Turkey near Dearborn and Garwood on April 16 (insa) Right: Dekay's Brownsnake near the powerline meadow on April 13 (marsrevolt)





Black-crowned Night-Herons at the Wheaton Branch ponds on April 22 (S. Davies)



Black Gum (above) and White Oak (right) leafing out in the park near Kennebec April 17 (Wilpers)



Tadpole (likely American Bullfrog) at the Beltway ponds on April 17 (Hugh Rand)



*Above: Orange Assassin Bug near Hilltop and Mississippi on April 8 (Katja Schulz)
Right: Tree Swallow at the Kemp Mill stormwater ponds on April 22 (Dan Treadwell)*



Barn Swallow at the Wheaton Branch ponds on April 13 (S. Davies)





Migrating Birds at the Wheaton Branch Ponds

*Above left: Solitary Sandpiper on April 23 Above right: Yellow Palm Warbler on April 12
Below left: Yellow Warbler on April 24 Below right: Myrtle Warbler on April 24
(All photos by Stephen Davies)*





Above left: Drone Fly on Wintercress at Wheaton Branch ponds April 20 (R. Wertz)

Above right: Male flowers and early leaves of Willow Oak at the Beltway ponds April 20 (Wilpers)



Left: Fleabane at the Wheaton Branch ponds on April 20 (Ron Wertz)

Right: Wild Ginger between Kennebec and Piney Branch on April 17 (M. Wilpers)



Bald Eagles at the Kemp Mill stormwater ponds on March 23 (left, by Dan Treadwell)

and above the Wheaton Branch ponds on
April 8 (by Stephen Davies)



Below: American Beaver at the Wheaton Branch ponds April 12 appears worried about predators overhead, for good reason, as Bald Eagles are known to hunt Beaver and the photo above right was taken there four days before. (S. Davies)



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.

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