



# Friends of Sligo Creek

## Newsletter July 2024



*Photo by Xavier Courouble*

### In this issue:

**Upcoming Events**

**Swimming in Sligo**

**Spotted Lanternfly Has Landed**

**Kiosk Plaque Installed**

**Water for Trees and Wildlife**

**FOSC Store - T-shirts, ball caps**

**Recent Nature Sightings**

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Upcoming FOSC Events

### Wed, July 17: EcoWorks: plants and people

A talk by Lori Lilly, Founder and Director

7pm at [this Zoom link](#)

Lori Lilly, the Founder and Executive Director of Howard EcoWorks, will speak about the many

creative ways that this non-profit organization uses native plants and an understanding of natural systems to support resilient human communities -- by creating innovative solutions, partnerships, and a skilled workforce.

FOSC will again hold a Native Plant Sale in September with plants sourced from Howard EcoWorks, doing good for people and the environment!

Come learn about the group behind the plants! And stay tuned for the dates and details for ordering.

---

## **Sat July 20: Stewardship Day**

**9:00am - 11:00am at the Kemp Mill Stormwater Ponds**

Choose your activity!

**-Litter Clean-Up** - Bring gloves if you have them. We'll have bags and some gloves and grabbers. SSL hours eligible. Bring water and a hat.

**-Weed Warrior invasive plant removal** - Wear closed toe shoes, long pants and shirt, gloves, hat. Bring water. Also loppers if you have some.

Look for the FOSC table at the entrance to the park at the far end of the Kemp Mill Shopping Center parking lot, 1370 Lamberton Dr, Silver Spring.

---

## **Sun, July 21: Weed Warrior Work Morning - Long Branch**

**8:30am at Long Branch near Prospect Street in Takoma Park**

We will be focusing on porcelainberry and may get to other NNIs. We will be meeting just North of where we met last month. If you are not yet a weed warrior, please register here:

**<https://montgomeryparks.org/event/weed-warrior-long-branch-sv-unit1/>**

Bring loppers and pruners and/or folding saws. Also wear long sleeves, pants, gloves and sturdy shoes. I have a few extra pruners. And bring water!

--James Gulley

## **Sun, July 21: Sligo Macroinvertebrate Monitoring**

**4:00pm at the Drexel Rd trail entrance in Takoma Park**

The monitoring team will be identifying benthic macroinvertebrates in Sligo on July 21. The nearest access to the monitoring site is across from **1400 Drexel St, Takoma Park, MD 20912**. Then take a right at Sligo Creek trail. There is street parking available. The geolocation for the trailhead is 38.977537, -76.986091.

---

**[Save these Dates](#) for more upcoming FOSC programs and volunteer opportunities. Details coming soon!**

- FOSC at the Takoma Park Folk Festival on Sun, Sept. 8 - volunteers needed.
- Fall Native Plant Sale - Date, details, and order form coming soon.
- Sweep the Creek over the weekend of Sept 28 and 29 - the schedule will be posted at the beginning of September.

Watch the [FOSC Home page](#) and the [FOSC Calendar of Events page](#)!

---

## WATER QUALITY

# Swimming in Sligo? Not Advised



*Kids swimming in Sligo Creek at Hillwood Manor Park in June (Wilpers photo)*

It's so tempting to let the kids take a dip into Sligo Creek or Long Branch during a hot summer day. When the heat index is 100 degrees or more, the chance to splash in the water is nearly irresistible for adults and children.

And yet, most families don't know that many portions of Sligo and Long Branch have high levels of a microbe/bacteria called *Escherichia coli*, or *E. coli*, that can make people quite ill, especially children under age 5 and adults over age 65.

Recent testing through the Anacostia Riverkeeper Summer Water Quality Monitoring program, which partners with FOSC to test four locations in Sligo Creek and two in Long Branch, shows that *E. coli* levels have typically been well above the 410 MPN/100mL\* threshold for safe contact.

Particularly after heavy downpours, *E. coli* levels rise as stormwater carries waste from pets and wild animals into our creeks, along with chemical pollutants from roads and parking lots. It's best to

avoid contact for 72 hours after it rains so that microbes and pollutants can be swept downstream.

In Sligo and Long Branch, FOOSC advises against contact with the stream water at any time.

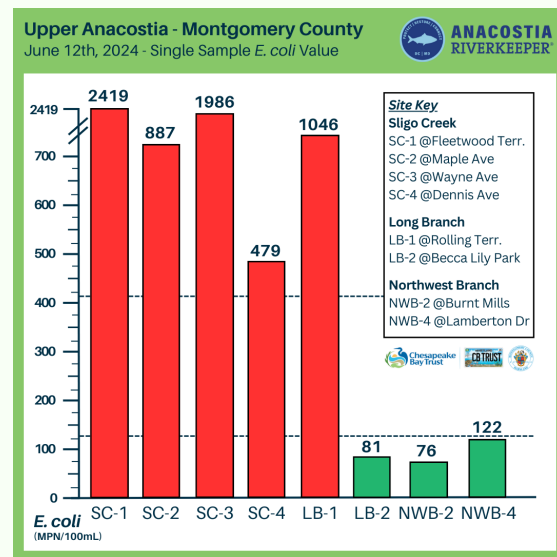
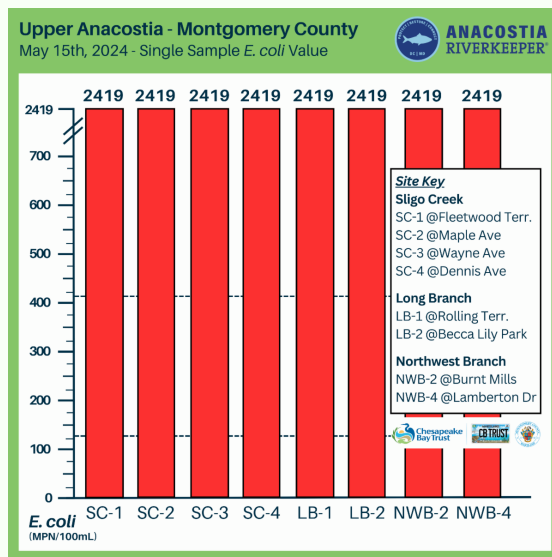
If you see individuals or families in the water, consider respectfully advising them that the water is not safe. Some possible phrases to use:

The water is dirty  
There is bad bacteria in the water  
Skin cuts can become infected  
Can cause stomach problems

El agua está sucia  
Hay bacterias malas en el agua  
Los cortes en la piel pueden infectarse  
Puede causar problemas de estomago

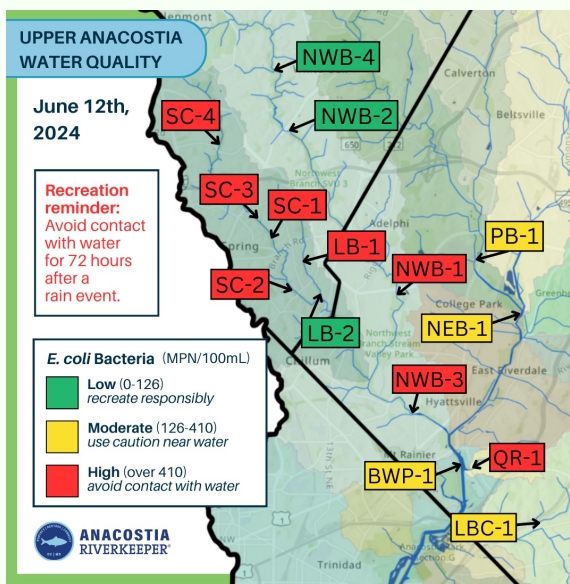
As the phrase goes, "If you see something, say something". By speaking out, you may help our neighbors remain healthy and avoid serious infections.

*\*MPN stands for Most Probably Number method. Above 410 MPN/100mL is considered unsafe for contact. E. coli bacteria can cause diarrhea, severe stomach cramps, and skin, ear, and respiratory infections.*

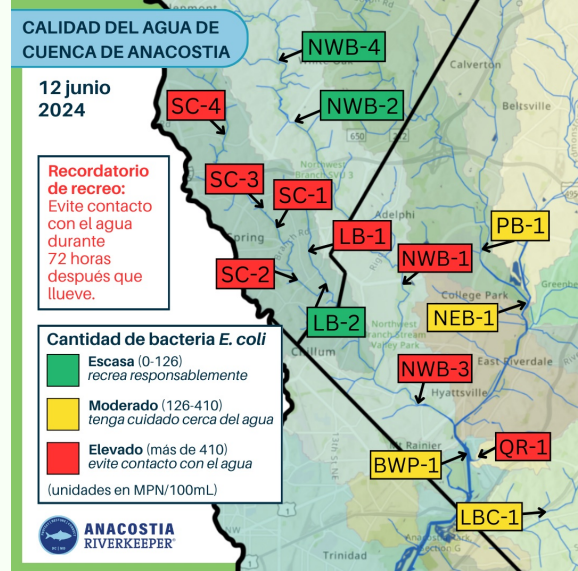


Rain preceded testing on May 15. Rain brings E. Coli into the creeks from pet waste that isn't picked up and other sources. And lots of other pollutants.

Dry weather preceded testing on June 12. Note high E. coli levels at all Sligo sites and one Long Branch site. The LB-1 site is in a more dense and heavily used area of Long Branch than LB-2 at Becca Lily park.

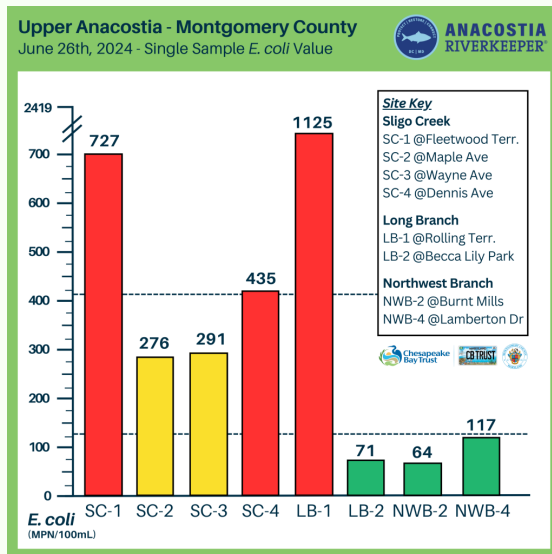


in English

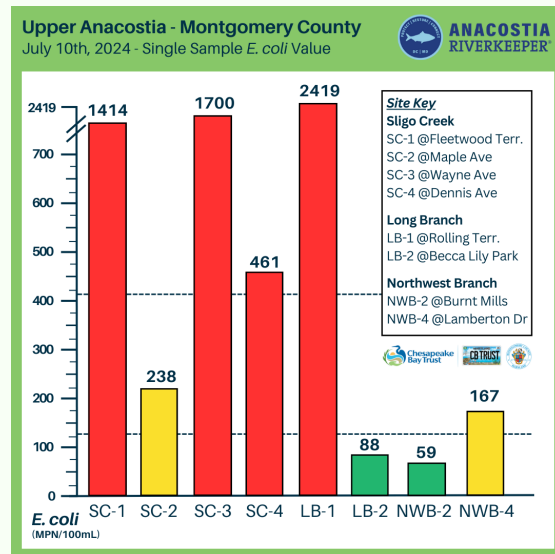


en Espanol

Above: The June 12 testing results across the Anacostia watershed. Areas with a bigger buffer around the creeks, less dense population, and lighter usage generally fare better.



No rain for the 9 days preceding the June 26 test date.



The continued low results of the July 10 testing at SC-2 (at Fleetwood Terrace) and SC-4 (at Dennis Ave) were a surprise. Note that in the absence of rain, the E. coli levels at SC-1 and LB-1 doubled; SC-3 rose 5x higher.

For these and future test results, as well as last year's data, visit the [Summer Water Quality Monitoring data page](#) under the Water Quality tab of the [FOSC website](#).

## NATURAL HISTORY

# Spotted Lanternfly has landed in the Sligo watershed

A new non-native invasive insect has arrived in the Sligo watershed: the Spotted Lanternfly, or SLF. The SLF has been observed in downtown Silver Spring, Takoma Park, near Dennis and Georgia Ave, and in very southern Sligo (as reported on iNaturalist) and throughout Montgomery County as well as in Prince George's, almost all other Maryland counties, DC, and northern VA. The MD Dept. of Agriculture has issued a quarantine order for **20 Maryland counties** requiring businesses to inspect their goods and trucks before transporting them between counties.

Native to China and Vietnam, the lanternfly spread to South Korea in 2006 and Japan in 2009. It was first observed in the U.S. in 2014 in PA, and in MD in 2018. It is now found in 17 states, concentrated in the northeast but spreading rapidly south and west. [Here's an interactive map as of July 2024.](#)

### Late Stage Nymphs and Adult Spotted Lanternfly



A group of the late stage 4th instar nymphs, and an adult. Photo by Steve Ausmus.

Like other planthoppers (we have at least 18 species in Sligo), the Spotted Lanternfly feeds on sap from plant stems, leaves, and tree bark, including agricultural and ornamental plants. The USDA considers it a major threat to farming. The piercing wounds caused by their mouthparts and the honeydew waste they excrete are harmful to the health of the plants. In particular, the honeydew feeds black sooty mold which can eventually kill a tree or shrub.

In its native Asian range, SLF's numbers are kept in check by their main predators: parasitic wasps. While we have many such wasps in Sligo (and in the U.S.), none of our species evolved to recognize the Spotted Lanternfly as potential prey, so there is currently little here to prevent their overabundance. There have been some reports of generalist predators (spiders, praying mantises, and birds) attacking and eating SLF.

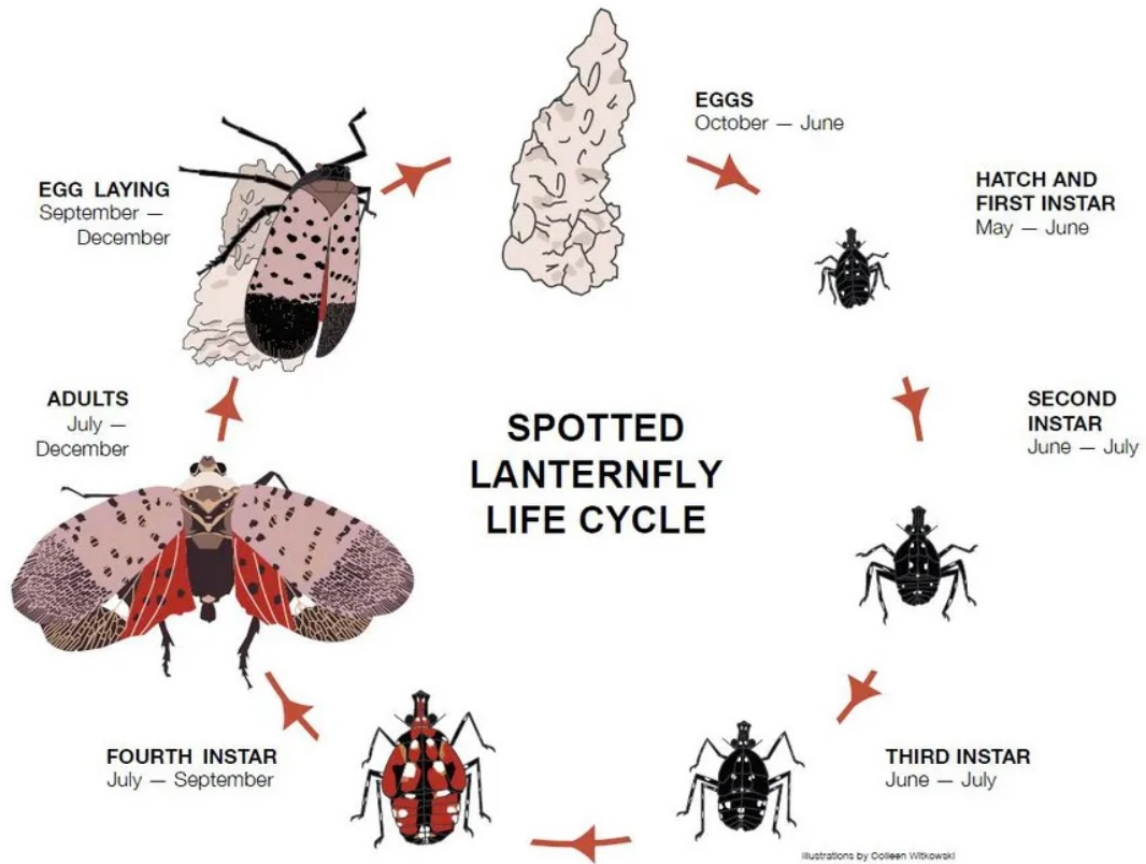
Not surprisingly, this fly prefers to lay its eggs on an east Asian plant, the Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) which was brought to North America in the 18th century. More information on Tree of Heaven can be found [here](#). Unfortunately, the larvae can also mature on Black Walnut, Tulip-tree, and other trees, and on Oriental Bittersweet (another invasive plant species).

The USDA is focused on research to halt SLF infestation of economically valuable crops and of ecologically important trees. Some promising research is ongoing including utilizing *Beauveria bassiana*, a naturally occurring fungus, to infect and kill SLF; training sniffing dogs to detect SLF; managing Tree of Heaven as a trap "crop"; utilizing [electrical wires with 60Hz vibrations](#) as a lure; and more.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Familiarize yourself with SLF's larval, nymph, and adult stages, illustrated below:

# Life Cycle of Spotted Lanternfly



The life cycle of spotted lanternfly, beginning from egg to adult. There is one generation per year in Pennsylvania. Adults die in the winter, and the eggs overwinter and hatch in the spring.

Image courtesy of Penn State Extension

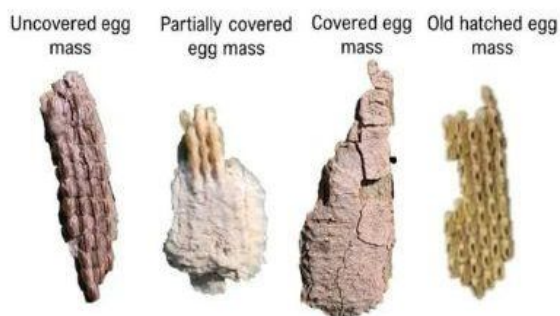
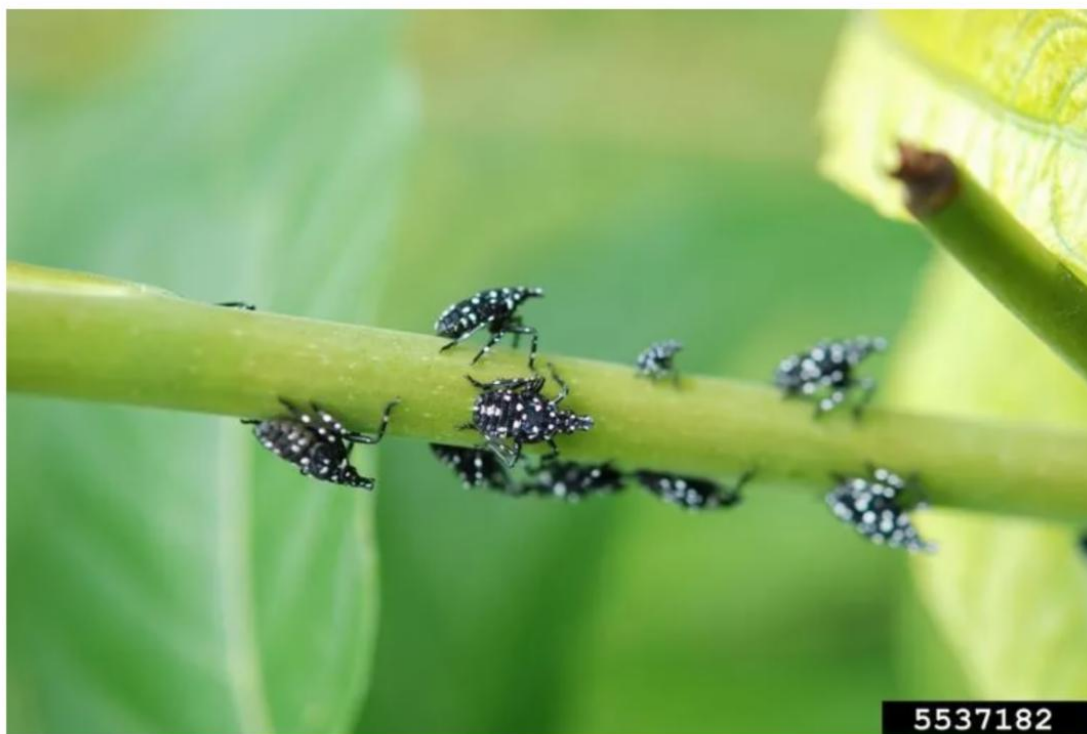


Image courtesy of Penn State Extension

## Early Stage Nymphs of Spotted Lanternfly Feeding



Several early stage nymphs feeding on a tree-of-heaven. Early instars tend to feed on the new growth of a plant, such as the stems and foliage. Image by Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

## Late Stage Nymph of Spotted Lanternfly



A late stage nymph (4th instars). These are the last nymph stage before becoming adults. They are ~1/2 inch long, and are bright red, covered in black stripes and white spots. They are strong jumpers, and will jump when prodded or frightened. Image by Dalton Ludwick.

## Adult Spotted Lanternfly - Side-view



The side-view of a spotted lanternfly adult. Photo by Dalton Ludwick.



Adult Lanternfly with open wings Courtesy of PA Dept of Agriculture

## Adult Spotted Lanternfly - Group feeding



A large group of spotted lanternfly adults, feeding at the base of a tree. Photo by Emelie Swackhamer.

- Keep an eye out for them in your yard and in the parkland around the creeks.
- **If you see them, please try to squash them.** They are strong jumpers and aren't easily caught, but don't bite or sting.
- **Or, be ready to trick them into jumping into a jar or bag of soapy water that you have on hand for this purpose.** If you encounter large groups in your yard, such as pictured above, per MD, PA and NY state websites, a vacuum easily captures them .

- They have been reported in downtown Silver Spring on a Tree of Heaven on private property and in Takoma Park on the stem of a rosebush, among many other sightings. You can see maps of SLF [on iNaturalist](#) and on the [NY State Integrated Pest Management website](#) of Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences .
- 

**Think you have found spotted lanternfly in Maryland?**

**[Report it online here!](#)**

(A photo is required.)

Your report helps state and local agencies know the extent of SLF spread.

---

- FOSC is approaching Parks in MoCo and PG County about actively addressing instances of Tree of Heaven on park property.
- If you have Tree of Heaven in your yard, it is essential to remove it now, before it feeds the current generation of SLF and seeds in fall. There are many resources available to guide you. Contact the [UMD Extension](#), and check the [UMD Extension knowledgebase](#) and [Penn State Extension resources](#).
- If you're not sure of which species your tree is, watch this video on [Tree of Heaven and look-alikes](#).
- Learn how to properly manage SLF so you don't do more harm than good in your effort to be rid of them. **Check the [UMD Extension Spotted Lanternfly in Home Gardens](#)** to learn more about how to manage them.
- Please don't spray; there is no SLF-specific insecticide and many bugs are good for your garden!
- In Pennsylvania where SLF is rampant, **traps for nymphs and adults have been effective**. They can be made by wrapping tape such as Gorilla tape, sticky side out, in a 3" wide band around the trunk of susceptible trees. But, always accompany your sticky band with a wildlife barrier to reduce the chance that birds, bats, lizards, and beneficial insects will fly or climb underneath. Check the band daily.



Image courtesy of Penn State Extension

*A tree with a home-made sticky trap and a wildlife barrier over it.*

The Penn State Extension advises: "To do this, you can build a guard over the band using mesh netting (e.g., window screening) to keep animals from the sticky surface (see below). Secure the screening to the tree at the top by pleating it with pushpins and leave the bottom open to allow the SLF to enter. It should extend several inches above and below the sticky band and be close to the tree at all points to reduce bycatch. There are also commercially available bands that use a fibrous batting material to hold the inward-facing sticky side of the band away from the trunk of the tree. This creates a protected sticky surface, which reduces the potential for catching birds and other animals."

- [See this website for a material list and detailed instructions for making a circle trap.](#)
- [See this quick video for guidance making and/or installing a circle trap.](#)
- Penn State Extension recommends "monitoring high-value plants on a regular basis to observe where SLF is feeding throughout the season. **Home gardeners have reported SLF nymphs feeding on cucumber, basil, rose, peony, Russian sage, and many more plants...**damage to these plants has been reported when SLF populations are high. **SLF nymphs generally feed on herbaceous plants for only a short period of time (less than one week) and then move to other plants.**"
- That said, SLF feed on more than 70 plants - fruit, ornamental and woody trees. They can feed through tree bark. They prefer:
  - Almonds
  - Apples
  - Apricots
  - Birch trees

- Cherries
- Grapes
- Hops
- Maple trees
- Nectarines
- Oak trees
- Peaches
- Pine trees
- Plums
- Poplar trees
- Red and Silver Maple trees
- Sumac trees
- Sycamore trees
- Tulip tree
- Black Walnut and other walnut trees
- Weeping Willow and other willow trees




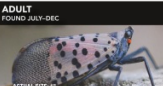
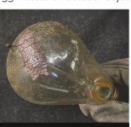


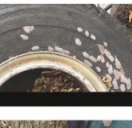

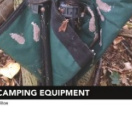
- Check any outdoor furniture, mowers, firewood, sheds, fence posts, garages, etc. for egg masses in the fall. The [UMD Extension website checklist of things to inspect](#) for egg masses. Since SLF eggs can easily hitchhike (cars, rail, air), check your vehicle and any outdoor item you are bringing with you before you go camping or travel outside your area. *(See some examples below at left).*
- If you find an egg mass, scrape it using a plastic card into a bag with 70% alcohol or hand sanitizer in it. *(See below at right).*
- Your caution will help slow the spread of SLF!

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### SPOTTED LANTERNFLY

## Checklist for Residents

**Help keep spotted lanternfly from spreading.** Before you travel or move any items stored outdoors within or out of areas known to have the spotted lanternfly, check for and remove all stages of this harmful pest. Here's what to look for.

LIFE STAGES		COMMON EGG MASS LOCATIONS	
<b>EGG MASS</b> FOUND SEPT.-AUG.   FRESH      ACTUAL SIZE: 1/2" OLD      ACTUAL SIZE: 1/2"	 <b>EARLY STAGE NYMPH</b> FOUND LATE APRIL-JULY ACTUAL SIZE: 1/8"-1/4"  <b>LATE STAGE NYMPH</b> FOUND JULY-SEPT. ACTUAL SIZE: 1/2"  <b>ADULT</b> FOUND JULY-DEC. ACTUAL SIZE: 1"	 <b>OUTDOOR LIGHT BULB</b>  <b>OUTDOOR FURNITURE</b>  <b>FENCE POSTS</b>  <b>VEHICLES</b>  <b>OUT-OF-SIGHT AREAS</b>  <b>CAMPING EQUIPMENT</b>	

Images adapted by Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture



Photo by Emelie Swackhamer.  
Courtesy of Penn State Extension

[Click to see a larger version](#)

Please be sure to view the entire newsletter including the Recent Nature Sightings by clicking on "View entire message" or similar text at the bottom of your browser.

---

**FOSC**

## Update: Kiosk plaque installed in honor of Evans Keita

Kit Gage of FOSC, Lynn Vismara of MoCo Parks, and Gregory Gendron, the scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 97, gathered on July 10 with Evans Keita and other Troop 97 scouts at the Long Branch Community Center kiosk. For his Eagle Scout project last fall, Evans fundraised to purchase and install this kiosk, with assistance from his Troop leaders and members. The scouts also installed the other two new kiosks in Long Branch for FOSC. Kit and Evans affixed a FOSC plaque to the kiosk that honors Evans. Check it out when you're there next. Thank you, Evans!



*Kit Gage and Evans Keita install the FOSC plaque honoring Evans*



*Lynn Vismara, Evans Keita, Miranda Okere (Evans' mom), and Kit Gage*



*Evans with members of his troop*

---

**Water Your Trees** - Trees, even established trees, need water now. From 2-3 gallons per inch of tree diameter.

**Water for Wildlife** - mammals, birds, insects, and reptiles also need water in this drought.

**Tips for watering wildlife birds insects.**

---

**Donating to FOSC keeps our many projects going strong.**

**You can give anytime and in any way that suits you!**

**Make a gift, set up a monthly gift, make a birthday gift,  
a gift in honor of someone or a gift in memoriam.**

**Just use this link [Donate here](#) or the secure Donate button below.**



**Your gift is greatly appreciated - thank you!**

**If you prefer to write a check, please send it to:  
FOSC, P.O. Box 11572, Takoma Park, MD 20913**

**If you'd like information about planned giving, please contact [info@fosc.org](mailto:info@fosc.org).**

---

**FOSC STORE**

**FOSC t-shirts, caps, mugs, and posters**

## Step out in cool style this Summer!

Order from this [FOSC store](#) link, or through the link on the upper right tab of the [FOSC homepage](#). You can have your order mailed to you or opt to pick it up locally. All sales support FOSC programs. Thank you.

**FOSC tees** are made of soft, 100% organic cotton and stay super soft! This is the one you will wear all the time. Short and long sleeves in 5 sizes, small to XXL, green and blue. The short sleeve tees are \$22 - \$24. The long sleeved tees are \$27 to \$29.



*Pat Ratkowski, retired Water Quality Committee chair, in a FOSC t-shirt.*

**Ball caps** are adjustable, embroidered, made of 100% cotton, and can be had for \$18.



*The FOSC ballcaps have a classic low profile in light blue and dark green with the FOSC logo embroidered on the front. (S. Deford photo)*

**Kiosk Posters** (\$15), **mugs** (\$10), and **window clings** for a car or home window (\$5) are available too.

---

### NATURAL HISTORY

## Recent Nature Sightings in Sligo

---



Say's Mantidfly near 17th and Avalon on June 25 (tony-futcher)

---



Purple Passionflower in the powerline meadow on June 25 (wilpersm)



Yellow Passionflower volunteer at Maplewood and Holstein on July 1 (wilpersm)

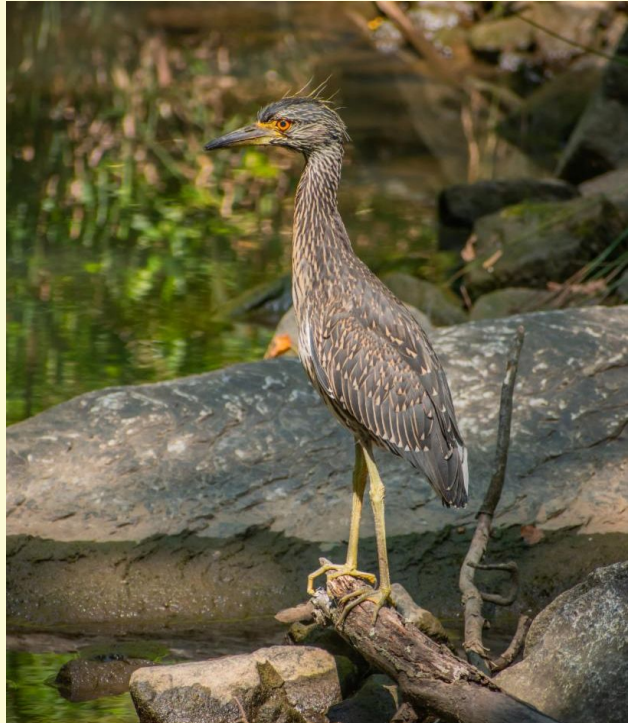
---



Red-winged Blackbird a Kemp Mill Urban Park on June 27 (Dan Treadwell)



Above: Grey Catbird with (probably) green lacewing prey at the Kemp Mill stormwater ponds on July 1 (D. Treadwell)



Right: Juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Long Branch near Houston (philipncohen)



Pub Moth caterpillar near Cedar and Wayne on June 25 (maragay).

---



Above: False Sunflower at the Wheaton Branch stormwater ponds on July 8 (mstrecker)

Left: Jack-in-the-Pulpit fruits near the Parkway and Brighton on July 1 (Regina Zopf)

---



Northern Watersnake at the Forest Glen wetlands on July 6 (D. Treadwell)



Above: Eastern Hercules Beetle near Flower and Piney Branch on July 4 (philipncohen)

Left: Green Cone-headed Planthopper near Franwall and Naim on July 3 (wildlymistaken)

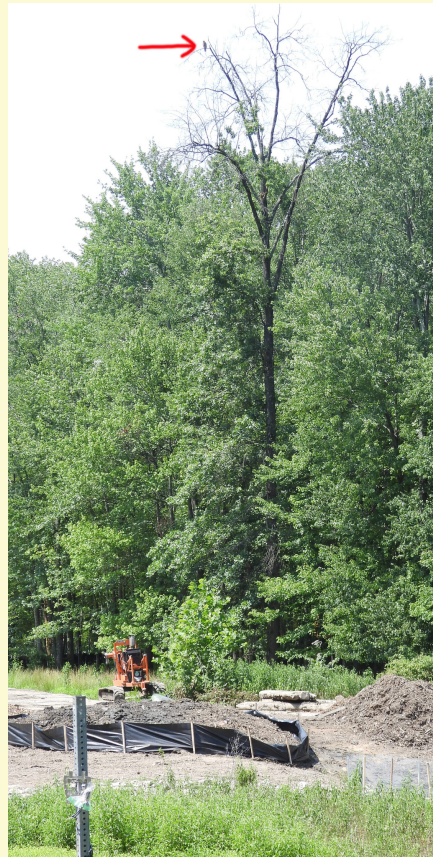


Eastern Towhee near Long Branch at Houston on June 27 (philipncohen)

---



Red-shouldered Hawk at the Beltway ponds (above) and at the Kemp Mill stormwater ponds (right) both on July 3 (D. Treadwell)





Green Mantidfly near 17th and Avalon on June 25 (tony-futcher)

---



Above: Bent-line Carpet Moth near 17th and Avelon on June 25 (tony-futcher)

Right: Curved-tooth Geometer Moth on Guilford Court June 27 (Ross Campbell)





Bluet damselfly near Lincoln and Jefferson on June 30 (philipncohen)

---



Barred Owl adult and chicks on Apr 21, 2021, near Boyd and Manor Circle, submitted to iNaturalist in June 2024 (Matt Felperin)

---

Photo selection and captions by Michael Wilpers (questions or comments, [naturalhistory@fosc.org](mailto:naturalhistory@fosc.org)). All photos taken from the iNaturalist project, [Fauna and Flora of the Sligo Creek Watershed · iNaturalist](#). Photo credits reflect those provided in the iNaturalist system.

---

# Need to Reach Us?

President (Elaine Lamirande): [president@fosc.org](mailto:president@fosc.org)

Invasive Plants/RIP (Walter Mulbry): [invasives@fosc.org](mailto:invasives@fosc.org)

Litter/Sweep the Creek (Ed Murtagh): [litter@fosc.org](mailto:litter@fosc.org)

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

Natural History (Michael Wilpers): [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 (Sergio Obadia): [outreach@fosc.org](mailto:outreach@fosc.org)

Treasurer (Tom Walton): [treasurer@fosc.org](mailto:treasurer@fosc.org)

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

Newsletter Editors (C. Dunathan & M. Wilpers): [editor@fosc.org](mailto:editor@fosc.org)



*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](#)



Friends of Sligo Creek | P.O. Box 11572 | Takoma Park, MD 20913 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!