



# Friends of Sligo Creek

## Newsletter June 2024



*Photo by Xavier Courouble*

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## **Making Sligo Creek Their Business**

After the last Thin Mints and Tagalong cookies were sold this spring, local Girl Scout Troop 34111 set their entrepreneurial sights on a new business venture: wearable pins made from recycled materials to sell at the Takoma Park Children's Business Fair, all to benefit FOSC.

“Sligo Creek runs through all our neighborhoods, and we wanted to do something that helped all our neighborhoods,” said Maya, a member of the Troop. They decided they would donate their earnings from "Buttons and More", as well as the \$50 award they received from the Fair as the “Most Socially Conscious Business”, to FOSC, much to the surprise and delight of the FOSC Board. A check for \$102.32 was delivered to FOSC in mid-May.

The 9-member troop of rising 6th graders draws from communities around the the eight-mile-long Sligo Creek and Long Branch. The woods and meadows, playgrounds, and ball fields are familiar surroundings to the girls. “It’s an important part of our environment and community,” said troop member Emma.

“I’m thrilled that these young entrepreneurs care so much about Sligo Creek!” said FOSC President Elaine Lamirande. “They’ve leveraged their creative skills into an ecologically friendly product, and their donation will help us care for the place we all love.”

FOSC will use the funds to purchase supplies for FOSC's extensive water quality testing program.



*Some members of the troop at their Buttons and More business table.*



*Three troop members with the award for Most Socially Conscious Business bestowed by the Takoma Park Children's Business Fair.*





*Some members of Troop 34111 with samples of their wares. The author is at right.  
(All photos courtesy of Troop 34111)*

This was the troop's first time participating in the annual Takoma Park Children's Business Fair. The event encourages entrepreneurship among children aged 6 to 14, who develop and promote start-up businesses at a one-day street fair, held this spring on May 4.

"They came out having a deeper understanding of how hard it is to put together a business," said Troop leader Chai Shenoy. "They are motivated to try it again."

We are proud of the troop and encourage them to pursue their next green business venture.

-- Susan DeFord

FOSC Board member and a Steward in Section 7

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## INVASIVE PLANTS

# Invasive Plant Walk

A very small but enthusiastic group of Weed Warriors joined Walter Mulbry, the FOSC Invasive Removal Committee chair, on June 1 for a walk along the creek between Piney Branch Road and Wayne Ave. in search of new and not-so-new non-native invasive (NNI)

species. As in other sections of the park, NNIs are abundant.

## FOSC Weed Warrior work

Heroic efforts to remove large invasive shrubs (such as bush honeysuckle and burning bush) by FOSC Weed Warriors are evident here. They have given natives such as spice bush and mayapple access to the sunlight and water they need to thrive.

## Vines, vines, vines!

Although Weed Warriors have tackled large invasive vines threatening the trees and bushes - porcelainberry, English ivy, winter creeper,



*Walter Mulbry next to an invasive Princess (Pawlonia) tree.*

wisteria, kudzu, and chocolate vine (five-leaf akebia, a new invader) - the vines get reestablished quickly. English ivy is the most widespread but porcelainberry grows much faster in sunny areas and rapidly overwhelms bushes and trees. Unfortunately, these plants are still available for sale in our area and readily escape from yards into the park.

If you have these invasive vines on the trees or bushes in your yard, please remove them to prevent them from engulfing and eventually killing your trees and to eliminate reseeding. See the guides below.

Please also be an advocate for Sligo Creek and encourage your neighbors to remove these vines from their properties!

## Common Invasive plants: What to do if they are in your yard

Though you may not see the seeds or seedlings in your yard from these common invasives, rest assured they are carried by birds, the wind, and stormwater into the parkland surrounding the creeks. It would be great if native plant seeds made their way into the creeks and parkland instead.

### • Porcelainberry



**Most Unwanted:  
Porcelain Berry**



**Why Porcelain Berry is Harmful:**

It creates dense, tangled webs that block out sunlight to native plants.

The invasive's blanketing effect not only cuts off resources such as sunlight to young trees, but also strangles them.

Porcelain Berry can take over trees reaching 20 feet in height.



**How to Spot Porcelain Berry:**

Heart shaped leaves with rough edges with stems that grow in a zig-zag pattern

Summer: White flowers

Fall: Berries that range in colors of white, yellow, purple, and blue

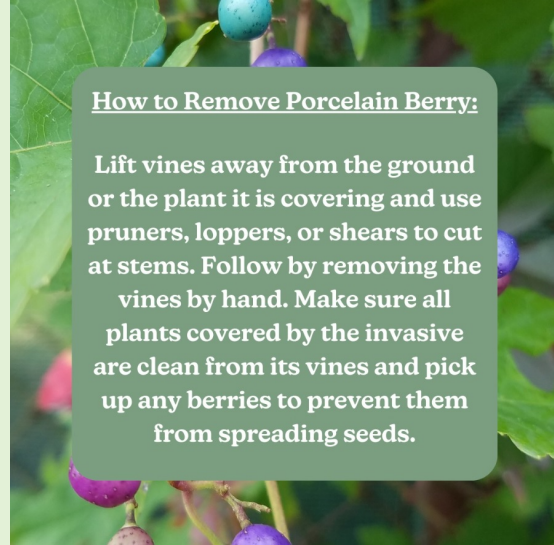
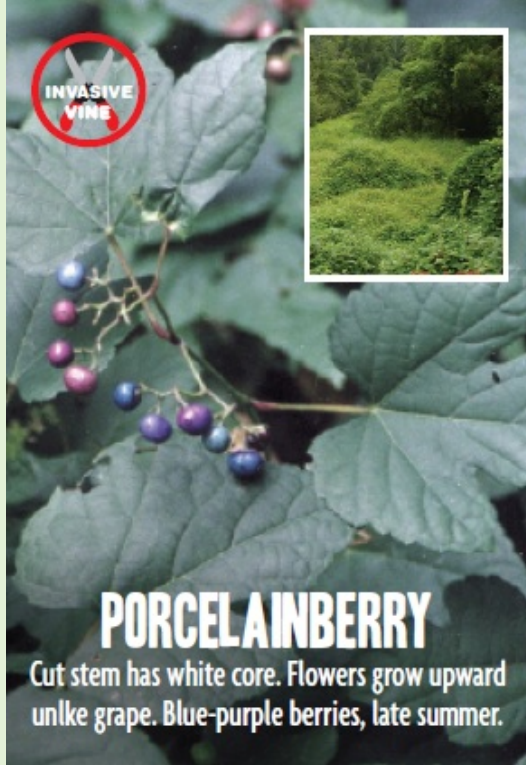
Winter: Beige stems that are smooth when young and covered in lenticels when aged.





+2





*(Photos above courtesy of Casey Trees)*

*From the FOSC Invasives card  
(Sally Gagne photo)*

Cloaks bushes, trees and other plants, smothering and strangling them. Fast grower with prolific blue-purple berries in late summer. Can cause rashes and itching.

*Click on the photos to see a larger version*

- **English Ivy**



*From the FOSC Invasives card  
(Sally Gagne photo)  
Click on the photo to see a larger version*

Kills trees by girdling them and outcompeting them for sunlight and nutrients.



*A cross section of a tree under ivy  
(Ed Gertler photo)*

Cut the ivy at the base of the tree **but do not pull it off** because the ivy pulls away the bark, exposing the tree to insects and diseases. Instead, let the ivy dry up and drop off on its own.

Then remove the ivy on ground by pulling it out. Try to disturb the ground as little as possible. A layer of cardboard in sections on the ground covered by mulch can help deprive any remaining ivy in the soil of light, eventually killing it.

Alternates:

If you like the look of vines in your trees, try native vines, such as Virginia creeper or native grape, which do not strangle the tree.

See many more invasive plants on the [Invasive Plants resources page of the FOSC website](#).

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## LITTER

# Two FOSC Adoptees

***From Nick Clements, FOSC Litter hotspot coordinator:***

Friends of Sligo Creek has two adoptees...not pets or wildlife...but roadways. Forest Glen Road (between Sligo Creek Parkway and Georgia Ave), and Brunett Ave. (between University Boulevard and Sligo Creek Parkway), are officially under the litter care of FOSC as part of MoCo's Adopt-A-Road program.

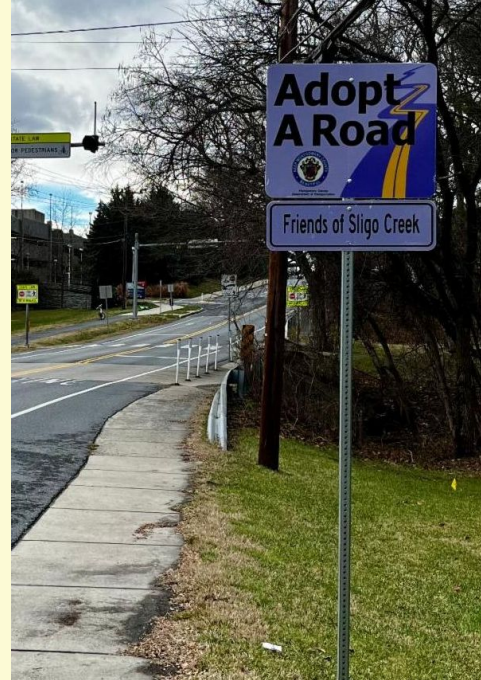
Both roads are in the Sligo Creek watershed, meaning that they drain directly into Sligo Creek or one of its tributaries through street storm drains (no water treatment or filtering takes place) and natural infiltration through the soil. Litter tossed out car windows, left after a picnic, or dropped by pedestrians ends up carried by stormwater into storm drains and wind into the creek.

If you are interested in helping me reducing litter in the creek, please pick up litter along these two roads; I know some of you already do. While the Adopt-A-Road



program only requires us to pick up litter once every two months, it is my intent to do it biweekly.

Please let me know the date and the quantity of litter you picked up along these roads so that we can record it and track trends. My email is: [litterhotspots@fosc.org](mailto:litterhotspots@fosc.org).



*Adopt a road sign on Forest Glen  
near Holy Cross Hospital.  
(Ed Murtagh photo)*



My visits won't be formally scheduled and yours can be just as informal, like picking up litter as you are out running or walking.

If a group of neighbors wants to tackle litter along any of the roadways in the watershed every month or two, please let me know at [litterhotspots@fosc.org](mailto:litterhotspots@fosc.org) and I will request that it be added to the Adopt-A-Road program. That allows the trash removal to be tracked and reported to MCDOT, DEP and other relevant county agencies. Thank you!

**-- Nick Clements, FOSC Litter HotSpot Coordinator**

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## May Litter Hotspot Clean Up Report

Seven volunteers braved the rain and the cold in mid May (!) to do a litter hotspot cleanup at Long Branch-Arliss Park. For two hours the group picked up litter with enthusiasm. Ed even managed to retrieve a road sign from Long Branch!





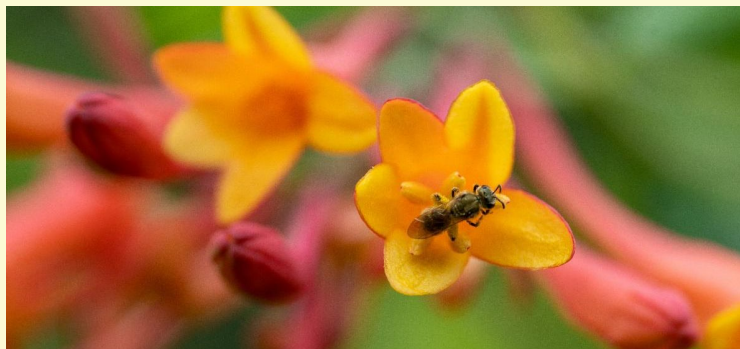
*Nick and Ed with the top find - a University Blvd. street sign that Ed pulled from Long Branch waters - and the group's litter haul.*

The group retrieved enough trash to fill five Montgomery Parks trash bags, two bags of recyclables, two containers of used motor oil, and the University Blvd. road sign. A great effort! Our thanks to all who participated.

-- Ed and Nick

## STORMWATER

# The Sligo Garden Program



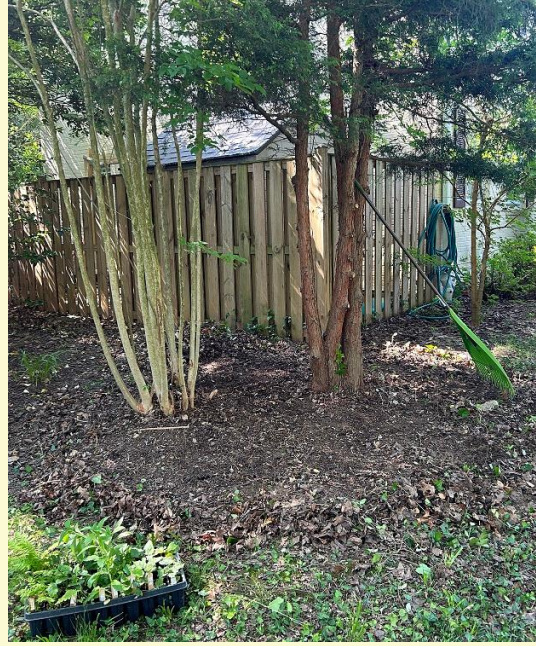
Residents of the Sligo Watershed have a last chance to get a low-cost Sligo Garden Plant Kit through the Sligo Garden Program. The program helps Sligo watershed residents convert some of their lawn into native plant gardens. The program is a collaboration between Friends of Sligo Creek and Nature Forward, funded through a generous grant that will end this Fall.

With a shady native plant kit, Sligo resident Christie Canaria fought back against the English ivy threatening her trees.





*1. Ivy growing into the lawn and starting up the trees.*



*2. Cleared of ivy, then covered with cardboard and mulch.*



*3. Configuring the plants on the site.*



*4. Just planted.*

With some time and water to get them established, the native plants will grow to beautify her yard, slow down stormwater, and provide nectar, pollen, and habitat for local pollinators.

Order your garden kit now by going to the [Sligo Garden Program page](#) under the [Stormwater tab](#) of the FOSC website. **Landscape design consultations are already sold out.** The number of garden kits available is limited! You must live in the Sligo watershed to qualify for this program. The garden kits will be delivered in October.



# Sligo Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Results

		Sligo Watershed						
		04/02/22	07/10/22	10/30/22	04/16/23	07/23/23	10/22/23	04/07/24
Total Count of Macroinvertebrates		103	103	101	107	97	103	30
NF IBI score / Health rating		1.57 / Poor	1.86 / Poor	1.00 / Poor	2.43 / Fair	1.29 / Poor	1.29 / Poor	1.00 / Poor
pH		7.6 +	7.6 +	8.1	8.0	7.6	7.7	8.3
Ambient air temperature		10.0° C	27.0° C	17.0° C	27.2° C	24.5° C	16.0° C	16.0° C
Average water temperature		11.0° C	22.8° C	10.7° C	20.0° C	23.0° C	13.0° C	13.0° C
Notes		Typical count for this site			Typical count for this site			Very low count - less than 1/3 of typical
		Lower temp;			Higher temp;			Lower temp; higher pH

(Click on the table to see a larger version)

The results from the latest macroinvertebrate monitoring on April 7 are now available, and as you can see from the table above, the results are concerning. The volunteer team counted only 30 total macroinvertebrates compared with about 100 the previous spring.

Nature Forward's Conservation Outreach Manager Gregg Trilling notes that testing this year followed a few days of heavy rains, which raised water levels significantly. The macroinvertebrates may have worked their way deeper into the creek bed to escape high water levels and not yet returned to where they were more accessible for sampling, yielding the low count. The next monitoring will be in July; those results will tell us whether it's a trend or a weather related fluke. Check the FOSC calendar and Home page in early July for the date and location.

## FOSC LISTSERV

## Which Would You Choose: T-Shirt or Ball Cap?

***The next drawing is on June 25 at the University Blvd Corridor zoom event***

The next drawing for a FOSC tshirt or ball cap is coming up June 25!

- If you are FOSC member, join the [main FOSC listserv](#) to be automatically entered for the drawing.
- If you are not yet a FOSC member and are reading this newsletter from your neighbor's copy, please [join FOSC at this link](#)! You will also be entered in the drawing.





*The FOSC ball caps*

Ball cap or t-shirt: which would you choose?

**Join the main FOSC listserv** and you'll be entered into the June 25th drawing.



*Former Water Quality Committee chair Pat Ratkowski in a FOSC t-shirt on Earth Day.*

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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.

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## STORMWATER

# Green Ambassadors in Sligo

Interested residents from the Three Oaks/Seven Oaks neighborhoods in FOSC Section 5 (between Wayne and Colesville Rd.) recently toured five area stormwater management gardens on the north side of Sligo Creek with DEP representatives Pam Rowe of the Stormwater Inspection and Maintenance Program (SWIM) and Ann English of the RainScapes program.

Like most of the neighborhoods along Sligo, the terrain in this section is hilly. Stormwater rushes downhill, causing erosion and flash flooding in Sligo Creek. The group saw and heard from residents that both the public and private stormwater rain gardens and conservation landscapes are thriving and filtering runoff as designed. The DEP reps. noted some tweaks to increase the gardens' effectiveness. Enthusiastic neighbors pointed out other problem areas that may be suitable for stormwater projects.



*Chris and Lauren Reynolds and next door neighbor Michael Bufalini, Pamela Rowe of DEP's SWIM program and Ann English of DEP's RainScapes program. These neighbors each implemented RainScapes projects to address significant runoff together. Note the new RainScapes flag for projects. (Sarah Rothamel photo)*

The next area Seven Oaks Evanswood Civic Assn (SOECA), FOSC and DEP will be touring stormwater installations and problem areas to the south of Sligo. This is the start of many conversations with the Green Ambassadors Program to help communities maintain existing and add stormwater gardens to their neighborhoods. Stay tuned for more information!

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

# Upcoming Events & Volunteer Opportunities

Watch the [FOSC Home page](#) and the [FOSC Calendar of Events page](#) for more upcoming FOSC programs and other volunteer events.

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## Weed Warrior event

**Sunday, June 16 from 1pm - 3pm**

We'll be removing non-native invasive species (NNI's), focusing on porcelainberry. Look for the weed warrior sign and the tall man in the WW hat!

--James Gulley



**Who:** Welcome all weed warriors. If you are not yet a weed warrior, we welcome you too, and please sign up at: <https://montgomeryparks.org/event/weed-warrior-long-branch-svu1/>

**What to bring:** 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!

**Where:** West side of footbridge near corner of Domer and Garland  
(<https://www.google.com/maps/@38.9969167,-76.9983759,17.98z>) in Long Branch (SVU#1 South of Piney Branch)

**Parking:** Plenty of parking at Rolling Terrace Elementary School, 705 Bayfield St, Takoma Park, MD 20912

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## ***National Pollinator Week Presentation:*** **Nurturing Native Bees in the Takoma Park Area and How Your Yard Can Support Them**

**Tues, June 18 at 7:00pm**

The City of Takoma Park is presenting this talk by **Sam Droege**, wildlife biologist at the USGS Eastern Ecological Science Center and the Bee Lab.

The talk will be in person at the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Ave, as well as online. For the online meeting, [register at this link](#).

Check out this link for [Quick Background on Mid-Atlantic Bees](#) by the Bee Lab.

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## **University Blvd Corridor Talk**

(followed by a drawing for a FOSC T-Shirt or ball cap)

**Tues, June 25 at 7:00pm via Zoom - [Here is the Zoom link](#)**

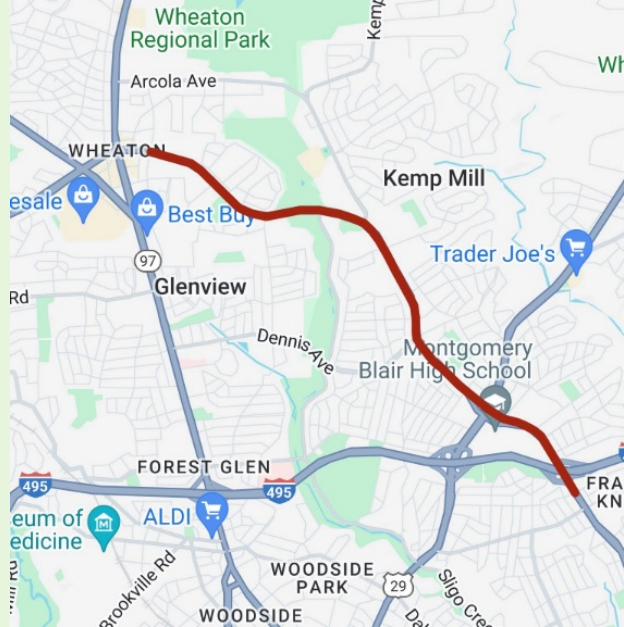
Please join a special FOSC/ Montgomery Planning discussion on the upcoming University Boulevard Corridor (UBC) plan.

Many environmental issues are to be addressed in the plan, including heat island problems along the route, stormwater runoff, and pedestrian safety. Possible solutions include adding more trees, adding RainScapes projects, and additional/improved walking and biking access, including getting to Sligo Creek.

I've invited the UBC Environment planner to present to FOSC so we can weigh in on this first phase of the plan. The Planning Dept. seeks community members' concerns and ideas for the future of this corridor.

The UBC plan builds on major MoCo initiatives including the 2013 Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan, Thrive Montgomery 2050, and Vision Zero to establish a vision for the future of University Boulevard and its surroundings.

You can [read more about the UBC plan at this link](#), and provide input directly if you can't attend on June 25th.



*The plan area is centered on a three-mile stretch of University Boulevard (MD 193) from East Indian Spring Drive (just south of I-495) to Amherst Ave. in Wheaton.*

At the end of the meeting, we'll have a drawing for a FOSC T-Shirt or Ballcap for everyone who has [joined FOSC](#) and the main FOSC listserv [Friendsofsligocreek@groups.io](mailto:Friendsofsligocreek@groups.io).

-- Elaine Lamirande, FOSC President

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## Litter hotspot cleanup in June

**Sat, June 29, from 9-11am (Rain date: Sun June 30 from 9-11am)**

**Location:** Sligo Creek Parkway at Roanoke Street, Hyattsville, MD.

Meet at the parking lot of the Green Meadows Recreation Center.

Please wear long pants that cover your ankles, long sleeves, and sturdy, closed-toed shoes or boots.

Wear gardening-type gloves, if you have them! Please bring water to drink.

We'll provide bags and have gloves to borrow if you don't have your own. Some trash grabbers may be available. If you have any questions contact us at [litter@fosc.org](mailto:litter@fosc.org).

Group leaders: Nick Clements, Ed Murtagh, and Jesse Johnson, a new FOSC Steward in Section 1.

Join us! Help beautify Sligo Creek, keep litter out of our streams, and protect wildlife.

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## Water Quality testing with FOSC and ARK

Volunteers needed

The Summer FOSC/Anacostia Riverkeeper (ARK) Water Quality Testing program is underway - but more volunteers are needed.



If you are interested in participating, [you can self certify online after viewing a training video](#). Once certified, you'll have access to a signup sheet to pick when & where you want to monitor. Testing takes place every other Wed, now - Sept 18.

**As a volunteer, you sign up only for the Wed. dates that work for you!** You can sign up to test at a single site, or decide to mix it up and test at different sites. Testing is usually done in pairs, and there are experienced volunteers looking for co-monitors!

Volunteers test for 6 parameters: E. coli, dissolved oxygen (DO), pH, air and water temp, and turbidity.

ARK is adding source testing to a handful of locations (include one in Sligo & one in Long Branch) during the summer- through a partnership with Dr. Amy Sapkota from UMD, so we can start to narrow down the source (animal or possibly human via a sewer leak) of high E. coli levels, but all our sites will get tested for E. coli levels biweekly.

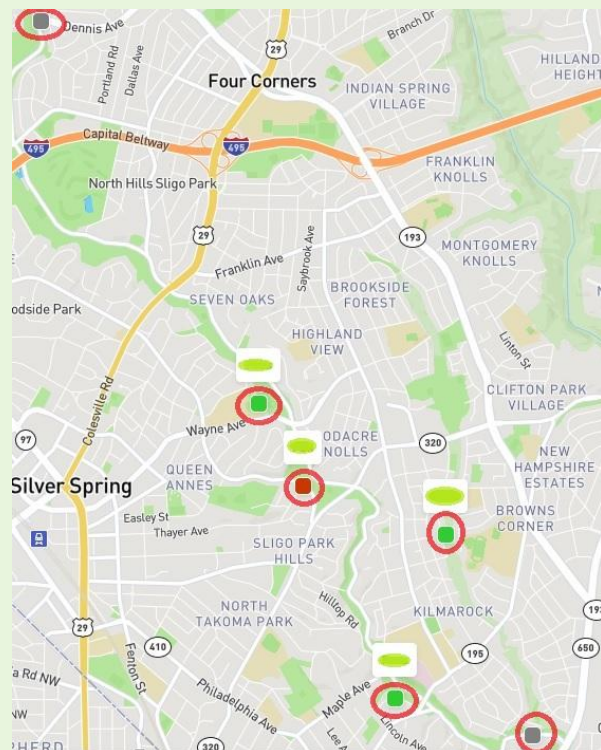
There are testing openings throughout the summer, please join us!

#### Sligo Creek (4 sites)

*Dennis Ave. at Sligo-Dennis Park*  
*Wayne Ave. near Dale Drive*  
*Fleetwood Terrace near Dale Drive NP*  
*Maple Ave. at Sligo Creek Parkway*

#### Long Branch (2 sites)

*Rolling Terrace/Clayborn St.*  
*Becca Lilly NP near Glenside Drive*



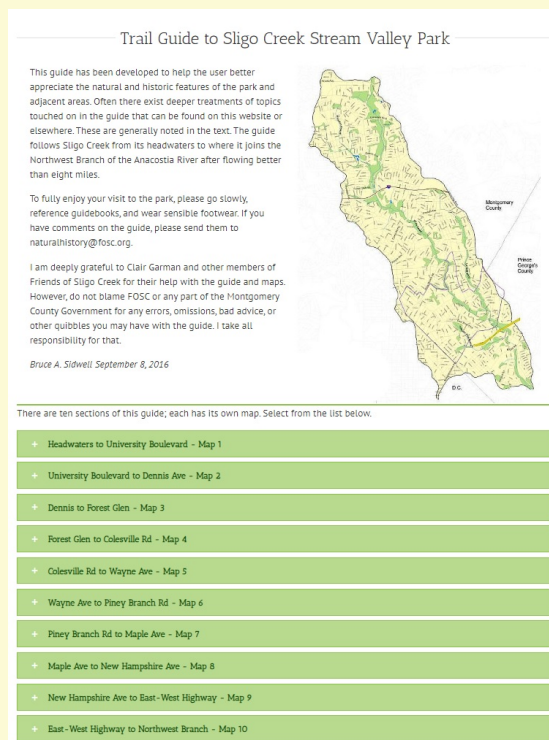
## Quick Reference

### Trail Guide to Sligo Creek Park

Longtime FOSC member Bruce Sidwell created the Trail Guide in 2016, to help Sligo trail users better appreciate the natural and historic features of the park and adjacent areas. Divided into 10 sections, the guide follows Sligo Creek from its headwaters in Wheaton to where it joins the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River.

### Water WatchDogs





Click the image above to go to the FOSC web page **Trail Guide to Sligo Stream Valley Park.**

See pollution in the creeks or heading into a storm drain?

**Report it asap to:**

**[reportsligopollution@fosc.org](mailto:reportsligopollution@fosc.org)**

- include photo(s)
- location, time, any details such as color, odor, sheen, muddiness, etc.
- Anyone can report pollution in the Sligo Creek watershed -- Sligo Creek, Long Branch, Wheaton Branch, in other tributaries, and in the streets that drain into these creeks!

**Would you donate to FOSC to help fund our many projects?**

**You can give anytime and in any way that suits you.  
Make a single 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 use the Donate button below.  
It's simple and secure.**



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

**Step out in 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.



*Former Water Quality Committee chair Pat Ratkowski in a FOSC t-shirt on Earth Day.*

**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.

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### NATURAL HISTORY

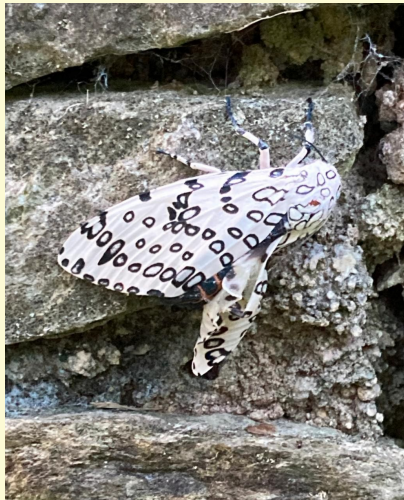
## Recent Nature Sightings in Sligo

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**Killdeer** adult and chick at the WTOP pond (Ga. Ave.) on June 4 (Dan Treadwell)

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Left to right:

**Biloped Looper Moth** near the Wheaton Branch ponds on June 9 (mstrecker);  
**Giant Leopard Moth** on Green Holly Terrace on June 9 (Enoch Fuentes);  
**Leaf Blotch Mining Moth** on Red Maple near Takoma & Buffalo on June 9 (Katja Schulz)

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Immature **American Bullfrog** (with tadpole tail) at the Forest Glen wetlands on June 4 (D. Treadwell)

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**Whorled Loosestrife** (above) and **Winterberry Holly** (right) at the acidic seepage wetland in the powerline on May 30 (M. Wilpers)

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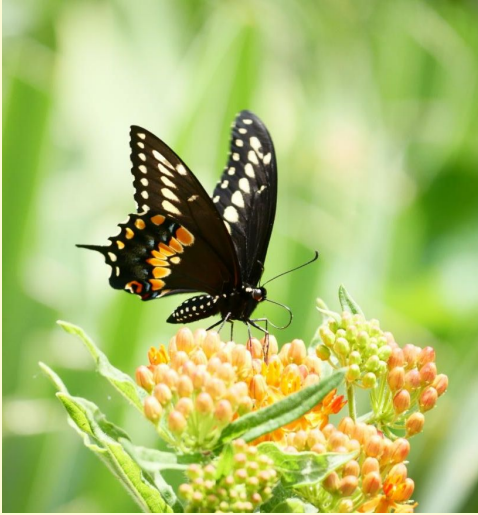




**Osprey** (top) at the Beltway stormwater ponds on June 9 and (above) on June 7; at the Forest Glen wetlands (right) on June 7 (D. Treadwell)







Left to right:

**Black Swallowtail** near Erskine and 16th Place on June 3 (kristin-marie);

**Least Skipper** near Sligo Mill and Oglethorpe on May 27 (nervousnoodle);

**Orange Mint Moth** near Wayne and Cedar on June 3 (maragay).

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**Virginia Opossum** near Garland and Carroll on June 7 (Jim Della)

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**Disguises (cryptic coloration)**

Left: **Magnolia Green Jumping Spider**, Browning & Greenwood, June 9 (leaf grabenstetter)

Right: **Dotted Renia Moth** in the Kemp Mill woodlands on June 7 (marsrevolt)

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**White-tailed Deer** fawn near the Parkway and Old Carroll on June 9 (Jim Della)

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**Broadleaf Enchanter's Nightshade** between Piney Branch & Park Valley on June 9 (M. Wilpers)



**Solomon's Plume** between Piney Branch & Park Valley on June 9 (M. Wilpers)



**Ghost Pipe** in the Kemp Mill woodlands on June 7 (marsrevolt)



Above: **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron with Red Swamp Crayfish** at the Forest Glen wetlands on June 11 (D. Treadwell)



Right: **Great Egret** with prey at the Kemp Mill stormwater ponds on June 7 (D. Treadwell)





**Green Heron** at the Kemp Mill stormwater ponds on May 31 (D. Treadwell)

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Left: **Swamp Milkweed Leaf Beetle** near Wayne & Cedar on June 6 (maragay)  
Right: **Red Milkweed Beetle** near Richmond & Woodbury on June 6 (allen browne)

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**Groundhog** near Garland and Carroll on June 13 (Jim Della)

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Photo selection and captions by Michael Wilpers, chair of natural history. Send questions or comments to [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.

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## 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)

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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](#)**



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

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