



Friends of Sligo Creek

Newsletter April-May 2019



Ellen X. Silverberg photo

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Learn How Communities Can Manage Mosquitoes April 25

NPR's "All Things Considered" visited the back yard of FOSC board member Kit Gage last fall to report on a new, community-based mosquito control method.

Invented in Australia, it uses simple, non-chemical traps and is designed to



The simple but effective GAT trap consists of little more than three buckets. (NPR photo)

relatively simple set of plastic buckets, a plastic mesh screen, and a sticky card. They work together to attract female mosquitoes and cause them to become stuck on the card before they can lay eggs.

The traps work most effectively when many adjacent homeowners install at least two traps in each yard. Kit and Edmundo worked with entomologist Dina Fonseca who had tested these traps near College Park.

At the talk, you'll be able to see sample traps and learn how to acquire them and set them up. You'll hear how Kit and Edmundo organized their neighborhood into subgroups to make sure people knew about the traps and installed them.

For more information on the event, contact Kit at [this email address](#).

work best if neighbors cooperate on the effort.

You can learn more about this approach when Kit is joined by her neighbor Edmundo Vasquez on Thursday, April 25, at the Silver Spring Civic Building. They will describe their experience using and promoting GAT traps in the Sligo Park Hills neighborhood. The talk starts at 7:30. Come early to socialize with other Sligo residents.

Kit and Edmundo started their project in Sligo Park Hills after hearing about similar efforts elsewhere. Now they want to help in other neighborhoods interested learning how to replicate that success.

For a primer, you can listen to (or read the transcript of) the NPR story [here](#).

The GAT (Gravid Aedes Trap) is a

Beltway Expansion Event April 24

The Maryland Department of Transportation is holding its next public workshop on the state's toll-lane expansion plans for the Beltway on Wednesday, April 24, at Eastern Middle School from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. The school is located at 300 University Blvd. East, just inside the Beltway at Franklin Avenue.



Current footprint of the Beltway where it crosses Sligo Creek Park

The first of eight such sessions took place on April 12 and was reported on by WAMU-FM at this [web page](#). Their coverage includes links to a preview of each talk and an interactive DOT map showing the impacts of the plans on properties.

Each session consists of two presentations by DOT staff. There will be an opportunity for spoken comments, which will be noted by a verbatim recorder. Feedback can also be sent to DOT online at 495-270-P3.com or via email to 495-270-P3@sha.state.md.us. (Sorry, but the FOSC newsletter system doesn't allow direct links to numerical online addresses.)

About 1,500 properties would be affected by the Beltway expansion plans, and nearly three dozen homes could be seized under eminent domain, although DOT planners say the designs are preliminary and will likely change. A set of 15 proposals for improving Beltway traffic have been narrowed down to seven and DOT is studying the environmental, traffic, and financial impact of each option. None of those options include dedicated transit. The state will unveil its choice in early 2020 and then decide whether to move forward, according to the WAMU story.

Several habitat restorations and stormwater management projects have been installed in Sligo Creek Park immediately adjacent to the Beltway. They include two stormwater ponds, a three-year invasive plant removal project, a planting of 50 native trees, a new wetland to treat stormwater, and stream restorations of Flora Lane Tributary and the creek that crosses the golf course.

Successful Long Branch Event

Repeated May 11

A repeat installment of "What Lives in Long Branch? / ¿Qué Vive en el Arroyo de Long Branch?" is scheduled for May 11 after more than 70 neighbors turned out for the first of these programs earlier this month.

Adults and children spent the afternoon of April 7 learning about nature and health in Long Branch, Sligo's longest tributary. If you missed that one, or just want to learn more, the program will take place again on Saturday, May 11, from 1:00-3:30.

As before, the event starts at the entrance to Rolling Terrace Elementary School. Leaders will then walk with participants down to the stream.

This program has been developed by the Audubon Naturalist Society for people living in the Long Branch community.



FOSC's Bruce Sidwell discusses nature on the banks of Long Branch on April 7. (D. Aguilar photo)

Among the family-friendly activities will be these opportunities:

- * Search for creek critters and learn what they tell us about the health of Long Branch.
- * Take a guided bilingual (Spanish-English) nature walk along the stream, led by FOSC's own Bruce Sidwell. We'll be joined by a Dance Exchange artist who will encourage participants to use movement to learn about nature.

All those interested will step into the creek as part of the activities, so bring boots (if you have them).

This program is organized by the Audubon Naturalist Society in cooperation with the YMCA/YFS "Linkages to Learning" program at Rolling Terrace Elementary and Friends of Sligo Creek, with funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust.

For more information, please contact gregg.trilling@ANShome.org.

Spring Bird Outing May 19

Join Sligo ornithologist David Blockstein and local birder Mary Singer to look for spring birds on Sunday, May 19, from 8 to 10 am.

Meet in the parking lot near the intersection of Sligo Creek Parkway and Dallas Avenue. The outing will go forward in a sprinkle but will be cancelled in case of steady rain.

The group will look for birds that recently arrived to nest in Sligo after spending the winter further south, as well as year-round residents and migrants passing through on their way to nesting sites further north. Last May, the FOSC outing led by David and Mary tallied 43 species that were seen or heard.



Wood Ducks on March 22 at the stormwater ponds near the Beltway (Treadwell photo)

David Blockstein is a Sligo resident and a long time FOSC member. He is a Senior Adviser with the Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences. Mary Singer has lived in the Sligo watershed for twelve years and is a member of the Maryland Ornithological Society. She started birding in the American South and has since taken birding trips to the West Coast, Africa, and Central and South America.

For further information, contact Ross Campbell at [this email](#).

Spring Sweep Draws 430 Volunteers

Our 2019 spring Sweep the Creek on April 13-14 showed all the signs of citizen commitment that we've come to rely on to promote the health of Sligo Creek: families with kids of all ages working together, groups selecting the Sweep as their community projects, and all the individual volunteers who rolled up their sleeves to retrieve unwanted trash and refuse.

"Unwanted" is certainly the right word for some of the strange finds reported, including a parking sign, a car muffler, several computers, a 4-foot-wide open well, a 4-foot-long fluorescent light bulb, a cash register, a pallet, several shopping carts, a refrigerator, a soccer goal frame, eight bikes, a plastic slide and chairs, a bed frame, 12 car mats, tires, and garden umbrellas.



One of the Carole Highlands families who helped clean the creek along the powerline corridor (R. Vanneste Courouble photo)

- Office of Councilmember Will Jawando

The only positive about that long list is that the items were removed from the creek! In fact, this Sweep was one of our more successful ones for removing larger items that are sometimes hard to pry loose and drag from the creek to the road. In addition to those larger items, our dedicated group of about 430 volunteers picked up approximately 260 bags of trash and 92 bags of recycling.

Groups that volunteered included:

- Cub Scouts Packs 8, 33, 205, 209, 275, 1072
- Community Bridges
- National Children's Study Archive, Social, and Scientific Systems
- Daisy Troop 34079
- Girl Scout Troop 966
- Sligo Middle School



Volunteers from Cub Scout Pack 209 with a long pipe they removed from the creek near the Dallas Avenue bridge (M. Wylie photo)

Sweep the Creek is a collaborative effort made possible by many, including our Sweep section leaders (and their occasional substitutes), those who work at the tables, the Outreach team, kiosk marketeers, photographers, webmaster, and, of course, our volunteer Sweepers. Thank you to everyone!

A special thanks to Montgomery Parks, which provides our gloves and bags, picks up the trash bags, helps advertise the event, takes photos, and serves as our sponsoring

organization for awarding student Service Learning (SSL) Hours. Our gratitude also to Prince George's Parks, especially senior park ranger Brooke Westby and park ranger Jill Lee, and for all of the Junior Park Ranger booklets and Anacostia Trail flyers that helped promote the event.

Our next Sweep the Creek is set for September 21-22, 2019. Stay tuned for more information on our website in late August.

Patton Stephens
Sweep the Creek Coordinator



Section of Sligo Creek bank near Carole Highlands Park before (above) and after (below) our spring Sweep (X. Courouble photos)



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.