

Friends of Waterford Park in Review



Monarch Caterpillar

Some folks have been members since our beginning in 2005 – The Leathers, Lesley Cristol, Carol Gutwalt and more. Because many of you are more recent members, here's a highlight reel.

We began as an alternative to soccer fields. April, 2005, the Reedy's and I put flyers in the neighborhood to see if there was interest in planting native shrubs and perennials along the path (because the huge sewer line project was completed). To our surprise, about 30 people came to the initial meeting.

Roelkey Myers showed us how to become a Friends group, and we were off and running. The MD DNR played a large role in the early days. They secured \$5,000 in Federal Invasive Species Control funds and hired the County to spray the giant bush honeysuckle that

dominated the understory of the woods. We started by just removing brush from the woods edges, then progressed to cutting and hauling away the dead honeysuckle. City and DNR personnel treated and cut dozens of alanthus trees from the hill near Meadowdale and at the Baughmans entrance. The DNR secured a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the license plate folks) and on Earth Day, 2006, approximately 40 volunteers planted 400 small trees at the east end of the park. Mike Ingramm had spent a day behind a big auger making the holes for these plants. Our first major fundraiser in 2007 brought donations for 21 larger trees; many of these along the path and on the hill are getting pretty big. The DNR provided the equipment and advice necessary to make the one-acre meadow. Over the years Boy Scout Troop 799, several Eagle Scouts with their helpers, the Hood College environmental club, Astrazeneca's Green Team, and of course the worker bees (aka the grey-hairs!) have put in thousands of hours transforming the park. We invite you to browse some of our archived newsletters on the website to see what has been done in these 17 years.

Your President's Tenure in Review

The vision that Doug Reedy, Marilyn Reedy and I had for a colorful, beneficial woods edge quickly became a vision for the entire 18.5 acres of park. For me, three facets of this endeavor stand out:

1. I have gotten to know and enjoy many fine people. We do the work because we want the park to be a healthy environment. We also have fun and realize the fruits of our labors. We do not pressure anyone; the volunteers you see are out there because they want to be.
2. I have learned so much. Thank goodness for the internet. What plants will thrive underneath walnuts? What plants tolerate limestone soil? What plants are most beneficial for insects and birds at various times of the year? I have more than a dozen notebooks filled with search results and with notes I've taken at seminars and conferences. We are one of so many groups trying to make this world a better place.
3. As with all organizations, change happens. I have needed the park, and the park has needed someone like me with time and energy. I still love working with the City and my fellow "bees", but we must evolve. At this time I do not know who will take the reins going forward, but we must find some folks who believe in this process and who will step up to take leadership roles.



Monarch in the Meadow - September

I'm not going anywhere right now, but we have to address the future. We have close to 100 members – if each of you will keep this issue on your radar, maybe we will find people who will do administrative or park project work.

The Year in Review

2022 was a typical year for our new normal. In past years we recorded 600-700 hours of volunteer work; now we average about 350. This is possible because we are on sound financial footing and can afford to contract with vendors for mulching, pruning and invasives control.

Volunteers always do a lot with fencing: first using black mesh shelters to protect young trees, then replacing those with 4 foot metal fencing as the trees grow. The deer are fun to see, but.....

We also do quite a bit of weeding of the planted areas. Each winter we cut and treat the walnuts, etc. that the squirrels think should grow in the meadow. This year the Vause family cleaned the teak benches at the turtle area and Kay, Susan, Lesley and I oiled them. Joe keeps the park fun with his painted rocks and alerts us to any problems he spots on his daily walks. He also does his own Facebook page. Rachel and Kathy take the lead in birdhouse monitoring – we did have bluebirds fledge this year. Dr. Rausch has made new sturdy birdhouses that Sean and I are mounting. Lesley, Allen and I clean out the shed once or twice a year. Kay and I take periodic park walks to assess needs and enjoy accomplishments. Jerry continues to bird in the park – he and others have now seen 122 species in the past 2 years. We are so lucky to have his expertise as he also spots issues that need attention. We have a good relationship with MC Lawncare; they do good work with weeding and mulching. We are in the process of developing an ongoing invasives control plan with a certified applicator recommended by the DNR. We have a reliable man mowing two areas at the east end as needed. Bartlett Tree Experts will be back in 2023 to again treat the green ash. Our next challenge will probably be spotted lanternfly – they are in this county and we must do what we can to keep them at bay.



Sean and Ginny installing birdhouse near downstream bridge.

Who are the worker bees?

The workers are mainly people who live close by. Some are here infrequently, but some come as often as they can. Astrazeneca tries to get its team here at least twice a year.

In no particular order, here are the 23 folks who came and got their hands dirty in the park this year:

Aidan, Kay, Joe, Brad, Susan C., Lesley, Susan S., the Strasser family, Sean and Stacy B., Rachel, Kathy, Fran, Hunter and Erin, Jerry and Steph, Allen, Sara, Philip, Josie, and Ann.

Special thanks to Kay and Hunter for watering and tree work while I was away in September.

Thanks to Ann Andrex, Anne Kenny, Kay Dicharry, Susan Stokes and Charles Eirkson for the photos in this newsletter.

As always, thank you Dave Maloney for our fine website.

Also thanks to Kathy and Pat, the two board members who keep the checkbook and members lists accurate, who do the work that needs to happen so we can function.

FWP, Inc. Board of Directors

Ginny Brace, *president*

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Turtle Bed weeding by Allen and Kay

www.FriendsOfWaterfordPark.org

Photo Album



Ginny and Kay working on fencing.



Tree swallows returned late April.



Kay and Allen fixing a birdhouse



Members spotted several young and mature herons this year.



Beebalm and prairie coneflower in May.



Hollies, willow and dawn redwood



*Saddleback caterpillar.
Many members ID'd this dangerous fellow.*



New bench donation, used by many people



Some of the viburnums are huge.



The Strasser family. The future of the park.



Astrazeneca green team at work.

People care about what they know. They know what they experience.

Bring your friends, children and grandchildren to the park, maybe pick up some trash, maybe just have a fun walk. We need new people involved with FWP!



The sugar maples were spectacular this fall



Smoke trees on the hill have great fall color



Aster and goldenrod in the fall meadow



We never planted goldenrod, but we're glad it's so happy



Susan Stokes spreading milkweed seeds



7 at the evening hangout spot

Purpose: *Friends of Waterford Park, a volunteer-staffed community service organization, is dedicated to the development of Waterford Park and Rock Creek Park as passive neighborhood parks by adding to and making improvements to the park landscaping and fostering neighborhood involvement in the development of the passive neighborhood parks.*
FWP is a 501(c)(3) MD Corporation. Guiding Principle: Do No Harm.