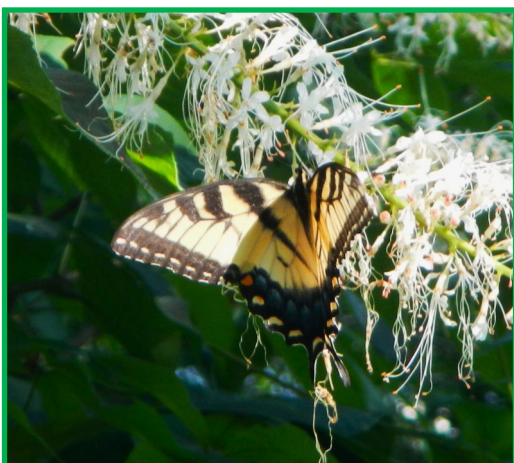
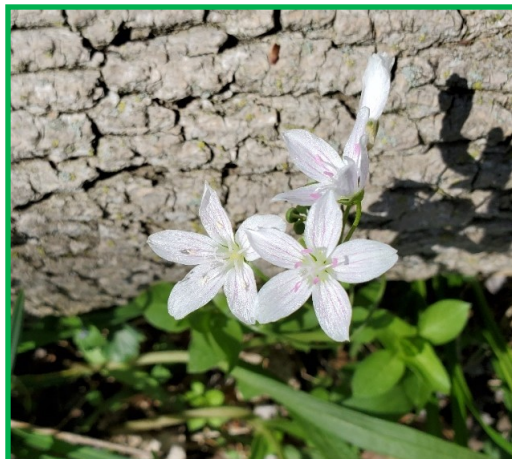


## The Year in Review - 2023

As we head toward winter and have our fingers crossed for a wet (and maybe white) season, I reflect on yet another successful year of park stewardship. As I reported in our April mailing, we took advantage of the warmth during the early months of 2023 to do a lot of invasives clearing in the woods next to the paved path, especially the area behind the kiosk. We cut walnuts in the meadow and the grasses at the turtle area in preparation for the growing season. Rachel and Kathy began birdhouse monitoring while Sean and I did any needed repairs. The Vause family and friends loaded tarps with branches that had fallen to clear the way for City mowers. Dan came for a park walk and noticed a huge elm branch on the hill that, if allowed to break completely, would wipe out several trees. Bartlett Tree Experts braced it soon after Dan alerted us to the problem.

When spring arrived, so did the weeding tasks. This year we established regular work sessions: Wednesday mornings and evenings. This has enabled folks to plan ahead. We were in the park almost every week. We did some much-needed work at the Meadowdale entrance bed in addition to ones along the path, the holly and Scout areas and the food forest planting at the east end. We cleaned up the old sewer line trees, removing dead ones. The City will lead a replanting of that line April 6, 2024. 50 new trees will be planted. Geoffrey Mott and Tyler Jenkins did quite a bit of chainsaw work.



Swallowtail on Bottlebrush Buckeye

In June we had a well-attended membership meeting at the library. David Edmonston told us the City has begun to analyze and hopefully improve park lighting. We have been lobbying for that ever since the lights went on in 2017. Tim Zastrow of Bartlett Tree Experts spent hours in the park updating the inventory of ashes. Bartlett completed treatment of all viable trees, including a few new ones. The City removed a few that were beyond saving. The City also removed a mass of vines that climbed from the creek level to the sidewalk at Baughmans. They filled a dump truck! My work log for the summer shows that we watered, watered and watered again. We filled about 80 kitty litter jugs each week, applying 2-4 gallons to anything we planted in the past 2 years. Barb Dunnington suggested that we get a truck to do more since some older trees were wilting. Fortunately the new lawn care company servicing Waterford came to our rescue with close to a thousand gallons over 2 weeks. Judging from the fine fall park color, the trees were saved. MC Lawncare mulched all trees in the open and several beds again. They do fine work. We did get some nice publicity in the News-Post Prime Time section. Joseph Peterson, an FWP member, wrote an excellent article.

Fall is the time to cut back vines and pull small invasives. Chris Mourlas, certified invasives applicator, does a lot of his work in the fall when the "sap" is flowing downward. He has been in the park several times throughout the year. Once the weather turns cold, worker bees will go through the woods without fear of yellowjackets and pull small invasives – the cycle begins again. Who would have thought in 2005 when we asked the City if we could plant a few flowering plants along the path that in 2023 we would be going strong? I certainly did not envision the transformation that has occurred. Teamwork and community support make it happen. I am proud to be a part of FWP.

Ginny Brace, *president*

**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.*

## Finances

Fortunately, we are able to hire good contractors to handle larger tasks. Our fund at the Community Foundation continues to grow, both from member and Cross Foundation donations and through asset appreciation. The distributions from this fund have paid for the bi-annual ash borer treatments performed by Bartlett Tree Experts at a very reasonable price on over three dozen trees. Bartlett also performs three fungus treatments in the spring; without those treatments we would lose all the serviceberries and hawthorns to rust. (The rust goes back and forth between evergreens and the fruiting trees.) Donnie Dewitt mows the trees adjoining the buffer at the east end. McLawncare mulches all trees in the open. Chris Mourlas of Reforest Maryland treats invasives. We have a new swamp white oak and serviceberry thanks to recent donations. This year we essentially spent what we took in so we remain stable.

## Birds

Several birders joined Jerry Warner this year. In November, four people recorded their sighting in the Cornell site for Waterford. You can see all the results at <https://ebird.org/hotspot/LI0188538>. Among the fall species were yellow-bellied sapsucker, great blue heron, kinglets, winter and Carolina wrens, junco, bluebirds, robins, several warblers, parula, thrasher and waterthrush. We appreciate these sharp-eyed birders who have seen to date 124 species in the park.

## The Fruits of our Labors

In the photos section you will see many pictures of nuts (which are actually fruits). This year many of the trees we planted are mature enough to bear fruit. The pawpaws, red mulberries and pin oaks have been producing for years, but this is the first time we have noticed white walnuts, pignut and shagbark hickories and pecans. The elderberries, viburnums and serviceberries all produced fruit this year before the drought months of July and August.



Yellow-Crowned Night Heron

*photo by Charles Eirkson*



Some Wednesdays we had large groups.

## Park Workers

Week after week those who are dedicated to maintaining the park come out to get their hands dirty and keep the park looking good. Deb Portney, Barb Dunnington, Kay Dicharry, Sean Bartlinski and Joe Ganley are the mainstays of the worker bee crew. Susan Stokes, Allen Beard, Robin Puritz and Brad Stokes have more limited availability but contribute often. Rachel and Kathy spend many hours monitoring birdhouses. Lesley Cristol, one of the FWP originals from 2005, continues to come out; without her willingness to fill the back of her truck with the kitty litter jugs we use for watering, we would be in trouble. Each year we put in hundreds of hours weeding, clearing around fenced trees, pulling invasives and cutting back vines. Susan Stokes is great at taking pictures as we all work. When we gather each week, the bees report issues that we need to address; together we enjoy each other's company and accomplish a great deal. Also important for our group, Dave Maloney keeps the website up to date and Shawn Cavenee serves as our resident agent.

## Board of Directors

This year Barb Dunnington and Sean Bartlinski joined our board. Both Barb and Sean work regularly on Wednesdays in the park and contribute their first-hand knowledge of park conditions and needs. They complement Rachel Zigler, Kathy Soria, Pat Lloyd and Dan Yates, all of whom have served FWP for several years (and we hope for years to come!).

### FWP, Inc. Board of Directors

Ginny Brace, *president* Rachel Zigler, *vice-president*

Kathy Soria, *secretary* Pat Lloyd, *treasurer*

Sean Bartlinski, *director* Barb Dunnington, *director* Dan Yates, *director*

Kathy Fay, *liaison to Friends of Baker Park*



# Photo Album



Coneflowers in Holly bed



Resident Mink  
*photo by Charles Eirkson*



Sean clearing around East End trees



Deb, Susan, Brad and Kay piling the invasives they removed

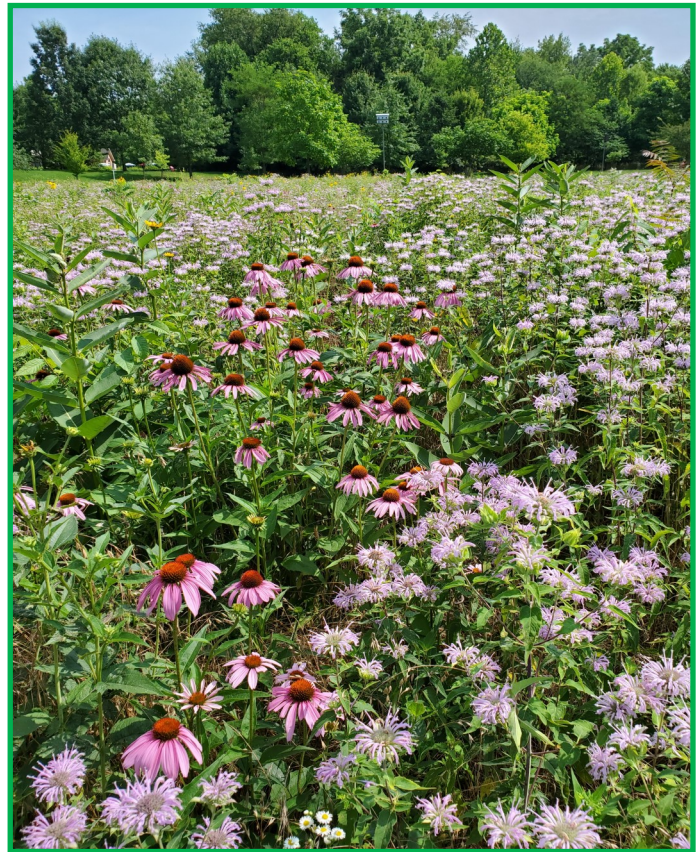


Bob Skeens helping a black and white visitor out of the pool.





Tadpoles in Vernal pool before the dry spell.



The meadow flourished before the dry months.



Fall Foliage

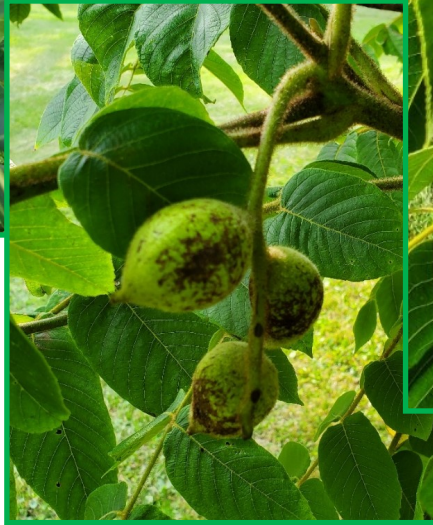
*Photo by Joesph Peterson*



## *Fruits and Nuts*



Pignut Hickory



White Walnut



Pecan



White Oak



Persimmon



Pawpaw





Red Mulberry



New pollinator species in the Holly bed:  
Monarda Punctata



Shagbark Hickory shells



Joe doing the annual walnut sprout cutting in the meadow

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