



April Cucumber Magnolia flower

## President's Note

*Clear Eyes, Full Hearts, Sea Legs, Big Shoes*

What fun getting up to speed these past few months, a behind-the-scenes look at all that's been accomplished over the past 20 years, all that Ginny has been juggling to keep things humming and to ensure past accomplishments are enduring ones. While I am out in the park most weeks puttering about, my initial focus as president has been on the administrative side of the house. Partially leaning into my strengths and very much leaning on Deb, Barb, and Ginny for their expertise and efforts managing things in the park with our dedicated crew of worker bees.

With 5 new and 95 existing members, hundreds of volunteer hours logged, many generous donations, and fantastic partners,

Friends of Waterford Park remains in sound financial shape. Pat works diligently to ensure our accounts are in good standing, our checkbook balanced. While I will provide a 2025 financial/impact summary next spring, I believe the results of all those efforts and support speak for themselves (see *Park Year in Review*).

My wife and I were lucky enough to travel to Japan recently, and we had such an amazing experience. Amongst many highlights, there was no shortage of beautifully manicured, natural, contemplative spaces. That is to say, no shortage of inspiration to bring back to Waterford Park. For our trip, I read a few books—Japanese history, literature, and other topics of interest written by Japanese authors. In my scribblings, I found two quotes to share in closing—

*"Care for mountains and forests, care for rivers and streams. To care for mountains, your heart must be as the mountains - to care for rivers, your heart must be as the rivers."*

Shōzō Tanaka

*"... if one fathoms deeply one's own neighborhood and the everyday world in which [one] lives, the greatest of worlds will be revealed..."*

Masanobu Fukuoka, One-Straw Revolution

*Sean Bartlinski - President*

## FWP Board of Directors

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Deb Portney, *Park Maintenance Co-chair*

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MD Senna and Partridge Pea  
reappeared this year

## Park Year in Review

### *Tree Plantings and On-going Care*

In early spring, we purchased 24 silky dogwoods (*Cornus amomum*), 4 pagoda dogwoods (*Cornus alternifolia*), and a red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*). Twenty-one of the smaller silky dogwood seedlings were potted at Ginny's house and nursed there until fall. The rest were planted straight away, along with four black cherry (*Prunus serotina*) transplants from Ginny.

Starting later in spring and through summer, amongst our annual dance with tree shelters, we replaced fencing on the 24 gray dogwoods (*Cornus racemosa*) planted last year. Those, happy to report, are looking great and now have more room to grow.

We had MC Lawncare come out to weed and mulch the trees in the field. We also had Bartlett Tree Experts complete our biennial treatment of 32 green ash trees (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) to prevent emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) from infesting them. Without it, we would likely lose many of the large, older trees that make up our forest canopy. By fall, our potted silky dogwoods were ready to plant, along with three beautyberries (*Callicarpa americana*) we purchased and a yellow twig dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) cutting provided by Deb. The Frederick County Forestry Board also donated two Blackgums (*Nyssa sylvatica*), which they planted after the city dug holes for them.



**"Bees" spent three sessions pulling ragweed from the meadow**



**New worker bee Kevin Walsh digging dogwood hole**

### *Invasive Control*

In winter, we shift our focus into the woods– tackling invasives and native vines that are too well adapted for the current structure of our tree canopy (too much sunlight making it through). This included a big worker bee session to clear two areas of sumac near the Carroll Creek bridge.

In early spring, we walked the park with Chris Mourlas (Residential Reforestation), our invasives control vendor. We identified several areas of need, including privet (*Ligustrum sp.*), multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), and oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), which Chris tackled across three sessions (spring, summer, fall).

In summer and fall, multiple worker bee sessions were dedicated to pulling Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) throughout the park. While at times it seems like a never-ending battle, it is gratifying to see natives like wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), trout lilies (*Erythronium americanum*), spring beauties (*Claytonia virginica*), and Canada anemone (*Anemone canadensis*) continue making a comeback in the understory.

To help ensure natives fill the voids created from our invasive control efforts, we also planted new groundcover, including cutleaf coneflowers (*Rudbeckia laciniata*), golden ragwort (*Packera aurea*), and swamp hibiscus (*Hibiscus grandiflorus*).





Why the tree is called Tulip Poplar

## Gardens and Meadow

Garden beds continued to receive regular touches of weeding and mulching. And, finally surrendering to the crab grass (*Digitaria sanguinalis*), we transplanted the Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) and Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) grasses from the turtle bench area to the key bench garden.

Last year, we tried skipping our annual late winter/early spring mowing of the meadow area. That experiment came to an end this year; to continue would have certainly led to an unmanageable thicket of unwanted grasses, vines, trees, and invasives. The city mowed back the meadow early in the year and hired a contractor to complete a series of three invasive treatments. In tandem, worker bees tackled thistle, ragweed, bindweed, grape, horse nettle, and a few volunteer

trees (*Toomanus specius*). After the first hard frost, we will re-seed a portion of the meadow with two pounds of native pollinator seed mix purchased from Ernst Conservation Seeds.

## The Birds and the [not] Bees

Rachel and Kathy continue to regularly monitor the many birdhouses in the park. We did have a wasp issue early this spring, but armed with soap in the early morning, sub-freezing temperatures, we were able to deter some from re-colonizing the birdhouses. Some nice sightings this year, and generally more bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*), tree swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*), and fewer sparrows (*Passer sp.*).

Speaking of wasps, there seemed to be an uptick of activity in the park this year. Notably, there was a nest of aggressive bald-faced hornets (*Dolichovespula maculata*) that had to be professionally destroyed, yellow jackets (*Vespula sp.*) in the turtle bench area, and a large wasp nest high up in the dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) along the path.

## Potpourri

Vernal Pools. In mid-March, worker bees labored intensely to scrape out two vernal pools that were almost filled in. A tough slog— we hope the salamanders were able to successfully lay their eggs... and that we might be able to borrow some heavy machinery for this task in the future.

Drought Conditions. Worker bees averaged about 20 jugs (40-gal) per week watering recently planted trees and garden beds from late Spring through early fall. That number climbed to about 30 jugs (60-gal) per week at the height of this summer's drought as our target list expanded. Additionally, we paid MC Lawncare to come out four times and put down 500 gallons of water per session on garden beds and larger/older at-risk trees.

Waterford Park Intelligent Lighting Pilot. After years of advocacy by Ginny Brace, Peter Brehm, and others, we are one step closer to implementing wildlife- and community-friendly lighting in Waterford Park. The City of Frederick applied for and was awarded funding from the Federal Highway Administration's Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) for a pilot project to replace existing and add new park lighting that is Dark Sky-compliant and sensor-controlled. This pilot project will reduce energy use, lower light pollution, and serve as a model for future city lighting upgrades.

Community Engagement. Events and visits in the park included those with Frederick High, Lonza, and Chesapeake Bay Trust.



Many tree swallows this year





Jana Davis, president of the Chesapeake Bay Trust, toured the park, enjoying the east end trees that the CBT financed in 2006



Sean and Deb cutting thistle flowers



Work crew at Carroll Creek bridge



Evening crew: Joni, Sean, Kevin



Creek wildlife





Barb and Kay pull crabgrass from native grass



Joe and Tom at the sumac area near Carroll Creek



Ragwort and Ostrich ferns along path to bridge



**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.





Deb and Ginny attaching a shelter



Joe digging out the  
vernal pool



Robin & Tom applying a thin  
layer of leaves over pool



Celebrating 20 years!!