

**Department of Parks  
Director's Report  
Thursday, October 1, 2009**

***Highlights:***

- **Sligo Golf**
- **Grants**
- **2010 South Atlantic Regional Championships at Cabin John Ice Rink**
- **Community Gardens Update**
- **No Child Left Inside Update**
- **National Public Lands Day**
- **Rock Creek Pedestrian Bridge and Hadley's Playground**
- **South Germantown Recreational Park: Public/Private Partnership Proposals**
- **Warner Circle Park**
- **Park Houses – Update**
- **Park Police Updates**
- **Park Openings, Dedications**
- **County Council Actions**
- **Events calendar items**

- 
- A signed 9 month operating agreement with the Montgomery County Revenue Authority to continue golf at Sligo was delivered this morning.
  - The Department of Parks received several grant awards recently from a variety of sources in support of projects throughout the parks system:
    - \$50,000 non-capital grant from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority to provide professional living history training to docents at Woodlawn Manor, the Underground Railroad Experience Trail and Oakley Cabin;
    - \$73,000 from the Maryland Energy Administration for lights at the Cabin John Ice Rink and Wheaton Ice Arena;
    - \$100,000 from Save America's Treasure, a federal grant, for the Josiah Henson Historic Site;
    - \$40,000 in various donations for Brookside Gardens;
    - 3 new Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPR) from a Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments National Capital Region grant to Park Police, to improve our ability to identify stolen vehicles that travel through our parks system, which can scan thousands of license plates every minute to query multiple criminal justice data networks looking for stolen vehicles, stolen license plates, Amber Alert vehicles and vehicles associated with Terrorist Watch Lists; and
    - Program Open Space funding for Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park development (\$2,670,000); Darnestown Square Heritage Park development (\$656,000); Fenton Street Urban Park acquisition (\$1,307,500); South Germantown Recreational Park, Barmakian property acquisition (\$1,152,000).
  - The 2010 South Atlantic Regional Championships will be held at the Cabin John Ice Rink beginning October 2 through 4 (for non qualifying championship competition) and October 9

through 13 (for the qualifying event). Michael Weiss is scheduled to appear at the opening ceremonies on October 9, 2009. There will be 700 top skaters and possibly some Olympic hopefuls at Cabin John Ice Rink for these events.

- The first community garden in the parks system located at Sligo Overlook Park is well underway. The Sligo Overlook community garden consists of 33 plots. Due to high demand for community gardens throughout the county, we are considering additional sites at a large area off of Briggs Chaney Road in Spencerville, Bradley Local Park in Bethesda and Norwood Park in Chevy Chase for possible spring openings. Because of limited open space on park property in the down county area, we are also looking for opportunities for community gardens on non-park property, including the Silver Spring YMCA and a privately owned lot in downtown Silver Spring. Public meetings for all future sites will be held to receive input from the neighborhood and interested parties. Our goal is to have 250 plots available for community gardening by the spring of 2010.
- Our No Child Left Inside (NCLI) initiative continues to promote outdoor experiences that connect children and teens to nature through hundreds of park programs, outreach to local schools and the development of two new natural exploration areas we now have open at Brookside Nature Center and Locust Grove Nature Center. We consider NCLI park programs as any where the participants spend at least 75 percent of the program time outdoors, which helps develop a lifelong stewardship ethic. Our parks staff is supporting existing school environmental clubs and assisting with the development of new clubs by providing programming and outdoor activities that promote park and nature experiences to help teens develop an appreciation for the environment, stewardship and the parks. The new nature exploration areas have been constructed with natural elements to encourage natural play and imagination.
- For National Public Lands Day this past Saturday, September 26, parks volunteers removed non-native invasives at Rachel Carson Conservation Park, Blockhouse Point, the Capital Crescent Trail, Little Falls Stream Valley Park, Cabin John Campground and the Underground Railroad Experience Trail; worked on natural surface trail projects at Meadowside Nature Center including installing new sign posts, blazing, and tread maintenance; cleaned up streams along Sligo Creek Parkway, along Long Branch and Turkey Branch; and a large group from Chevy Chase and Identity, Inc. removed invasives, fixed trails and cleaned up at Brookside Nature Center.
- Two large park projects are underway. Our contractor for the Rock Creek Pedestrian Bridge project will erect bridge girders over Veirs Mill Road during the weekend of October 3, which will require lane closures on Veirs Mill Road. Also, at Hadley's Playground at Falls Road Local Park the playground surface is being replaced and is expected to be completed by mid-October. A new shelter will also be installed in November at Falls Road Park.
- At South Germantown Recreational Park: the Miracle League of Montgomery County is in the planning stages for the development of the baseball field that will be accessible to individuals with disabilities. Planning is underway for the Jack Schore Tennis Center, another public/private partnership proposal for the park. The partner is revising the

preliminary design for the proposed facility and parks staff is planning to conduct a community meeting in early November and present the partnership proposal to the Planning Board for approval in December.

- We are working to finish contracting to complete design for the Warner Circle Special Park. Parks staff intends to brief members of the County Council, state delegation and Congressman Van Hollen's office shortly on the concept plan, the CIP funding request and our intention to seek funds from a variety of sources.
- This summer, parks property management staff demolished two park houses: one on Good Hope Road on August 22 and another on Beechbank Road in Kensington on July 15. The removal of the Good Hope Road house and driveway provides for an increase in pervious surfaces and improvement in the health of the Upper Paint Branch Special Protection Area. The removal of the house on Beechbank Road was critical to the safety of the community, as it was in extremely poor condition and caused Park Police to patrol more often.
- Park Police Updates: Park Police officers have been working with the Montgomery County Recreation Department in the after school Homework Club at the Long Branch Recreation Center, assisting students with homework, participating in recreational activities and serving as mentors. Park Police officers have been actively involved in the statewide Smooth Operator Program, enforcing aggressive driving and pedestrian safety on park roadways. Park Police officers, rangers and civilian staff took part in more than thirteen different National Night Out events throughout the county, focusing on community awareness, trail safety education and theft reduction.
- Park Openings, Dedications: The brand new dog park at Cabin John Regional Park located at 10900 Westlake Drive in Bethesda is now open. The dog park is currently FREE to use and open during regular park hours, sunrise to sunset. However, the dog park will be closed from 9:00 am through 11:00 am every Tuesday for weekly park maintenance. Also, I joined Broad Acres Elementary School Principal Michael Bayewitz, County Executive Isiah Leggett, Parks Commissioner Marye Wells-Harley, County Council President Phil Andrews and others to dedicate the newly renovated Broadacres Local Park, Wednesday, September 23. Hundreds of people showed up for a very successful event. Broadacres Local Park, located next to Broad Acres Elementary School, now features a basketball court, soccer field, paved trails and landscaping. The students of Broad Acres Elementary School also left their mark on the park design, with their original artwork prominently featured in the seat walls of the new plaza area and park entrance.
- The following is an update on recent County Council action taken on parks items:
  - Tuesday, September 29 the County Council voted seven to two to approve the County Executive's request of \$150,000 to keep the Sligo Creek Golf Course in operation through June 30, 2010 and 8-1 to convene the Sligo Creek Task Force to consider ways of making the course self-sustaining in the long-term;
  - Today, October 1, the Department of Parks will join the Recreation Department in presenting our joint recommendations to the County Council on improving the delivery of recreational services and programs in the county;

- We are working with our consultants on the Program of Requirements for the relocation of the Central Maintenance Facility, which we will complete and forward to county staff later this month; and
- We are working with Council staff on Park and Planning Spending Affordability Guidelines and budget issues, and preparing our Semiannual Report for October.

### **Events**

- OCTOBER 3 & 4—Harvest Festival, 11:00 am – 4:00 pm (both days), Agricultural History Farm Park, [www.AgHistoryFarm.org](http://www.AgHistoryFarm.org).
- OCTOBER 4, 10, 17 & 24—Natural Surface Trail Project Days, various times, Cabin John Regional Park, Rachel Carson Greenway Trail, Black Hill Regional Park, [www.MontgomeryTrails.org](http://www.MontgomeryTrails.org).
- OCTOBER 9—2010 South Atlantic Regional Championships Opening Ceremony, 11:30 am – 12:15 pm, [www.CabinJohnIce.com](http://www.CabinJohnIce.com).
- OCTOBER 10—Flea Market in the Park (last one of the year), Wheaton Outdoor Rink, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm, [www.WheatonIceArena.com](http://www.WheatonIceArena.com).
- OCTOBER 10—Haunted Train and Creepy Carousel at Wheaton Regional Park (opening day), 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm, [www.WheatonTrainandCarousel.com](http://www.WheatonTrainandCarousel.com).
- OCTOBER 22—Eye Spy Train at Cabin John Regional Park (opening day), 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm, [www.CabinJohnTrain.com](http://www.CabinJohnTrain.com).
- OCTOBER 24—Community Service Day, various times: forest restoration and native planting at Rachel Carson Conservation Park; natural surface trail project at Rachel Carson Greenway; invasive plant removal along Little Falls Stream Valley; park cleanup at Broadacres Local Park; and stream cleanup at Long Branch, [www.ParksVolunteers.org](http://www.ParksVolunteers.org).
- OCTOBER 31—“Howl-O-Ween” at the Cabin John Dog Park, Grand Opening Celebration, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon.
- NOVEMBER 6 & 7—Maryland Emancipation Day, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm, Oakley Cabin, Josiah Henson Historic Site, Underground Railroad Experience Trail, [www.ParksCulturalResources.org](http://www.ParksCulturalResources.org).
- NOVEMBER 8—Not-So-Big Wedding Boutique, 12:00 noon – 5:00 pm, Rockwood Manor, [www.ParkEventCenters.org](http://www.ParkEventCenters.org).

*Mary R. Bradford*

*Director*

*Montgomery County Department of Parks*