

**Department of Parks
Director's Report
Thursday, February 24, 2011**

Highlights:

- **Lease and Fee Changes Anticipated for Cell Towers on Parkland**
 - **Facility Planning Underway for New Germantown Park: Seneca Crossing**
 - **Seasonal Openings: Olney Manor Skate Park, Little Bennett Campground, New Tent Pad for Rent at Woodlawn Manor**
 - **Train Updates**
 - **Storm Damage Clean Up in Shady Grove Area**
 - **Department Staff Training**
 - **Demolitions: Valley Mill Pool and Warner Property's Nursing Home**
 - **Parks Volunteers: Congrats to Friends of Sligo Creek, Welcome to New Volunteer Trail Rangers & Plans Underway for Our Big Park Cleanup April 9**
 - **Legislative update**
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Events

- FEBRUARY 25—Green Matters Symposium, “Real Food Renaissance,” www.BrooksideGardens.org
- FEBRUARY 5, 12, 19, 26—Guided Tours, “A Walk in Father Henson's Footsteps,” 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm, Josiah Henson Special Park, www.JosiahHensonSite.org
- FEBRUARY 19 -- Wheaton Ice Arena will hold its annual Winter Show on Saturday, with over 40 skaters participating. They have won numerous national awards.
- FEBRUARY 26—Poetry Event, “Lyrical Rhythms: The Sounds of Freedom,” 3:00 - 4:00 pm, Josiah Henson Special Park, www.JosiahHensonSite.org
- MARCH 13—Brides on the Bus, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm, a tour of all five Montgomery Parks event centers, www.ParkEventCenters.com

Highlights

- Our property management team is in the information gathering stages—identifying what other government agencies charge, including Montgomery County Public Schools—for revising our lease agreements for telecommunications towers. We anticipate a rental fee increase. We collect rent and administer leases for cell towers and fiber optics on park land. Due to the latest 4G technology (4G stands for the fourth generation of cellular wireless standards), we are already seeing a significant increase in requests to locate telecommunications facilities on park property.
- Parks staff held a community meeting on February 9 with about 65 residents attending to discuss facility planning for the new Seneca Crossing Local Park in Germantown.
- Opening this spring: The Olney Manor Skate Park will open April 1 under the management of Enterprise Division within the Montgomery County Department of Parks, M-NCPPC (phones, time clocks, etc. have been installed in anticipation of opening). Little Bennett

Campground will open on March 4 (weekend camping only in March) and daily starting April 1. Also, beginning April 1 a new 30 foot by 60 foot white tent with cathedral window side walls, designer lighting and ceiling fans and brick floor, is available for rent, at Woodlawn Manor for outdoor special events (construction is soon underway).

- Train Updates: The Wheaton Train locomotive was overhauled at the Black Hill Maintenance facility and returned to Wheaton. The Cabin John Train locomotive has been taken to Black Hill Maintenance for off-season repairs and maintenance.
- Parks staff has been responding to citizen concerns regarding storm damage and tree issues where park property borders private property. Parks staff in the Shady Grove area continues to clean up and remove damaged tree limbs and debris as a result of recent snow storms.
- The Department of Parks is intensifying training efforts in various ways to ensure that personnel are fully capable of carrying out their duties. A new online training calendar was developed to promote and track training that allows the department to calculate training hours offered and provides a record of training attended by each employee. Additionally, we are initiating Career Development Plans by job category.
- Demolitions: The demolition of the Valley Mill Pool on Randolph Road is underway. This former outdoor pool served Recreation Department camps and has been un-utilized for a number of years. The Department of Recreation approved the demolition this winter. Preparations for the demolition of the Warner property's nursing home wing are underway. Parks staff is securing the required permits.
- Parks Volunteers: We presented a certificate of appreciation to the Friends of Sligo Creek for 10 years of support for Sligo Creek and Montgomery Parks. Thanks again! We welcomed 5 new volunteer trail rangers who are trained now to inspect natural surface trail for us. April 9 is our big annual park/stream cleanup day this spring. We already have 15 cleanup sites, and expect many more. The Alice Ferguson Foundation is sponsoring a volunteer site leader training on March 1.
- Legislation: We continue to monitor various bond bills; provide comments on legislation that could impact operations (animal control, youth athlete protection, pesticide, stormwater, land acquisition and POS); and occasionally participate in events on behalf of the Commission and parks (briefing the delegation on M-NCPPC; a workshop summit on the impact of parks and recreation on youth, the economy, and health.) A bill that would have enabled a merger of park police into County police, and also would have removed the statutory tax floor for parks, was withdrawn.
- CIP: FY11-16 Biennial CIP Amendment to the county: On November 1, the Commission submitted its Amended FY11-16 CIP totaling \$169.9 million, which is \$3.8 million above its currently approved CIP. The Commission included amendments to delay the schedules of four major projects in an effort to reduce the impact to the operating budget through FY14. On January 14, the County Executive submitted to the County Council his recommendations on the Amended FY11-16 Capital Improvements Program (CIP). He generally supported the

Commission's CIP amendments, except for minor cuts and shifts in funding, which the Planning Board had approved. The County Executive's Amended CIP for the Commission is \$169.6 million, only \$300,000 less than what the Commission requested. On February 14, Commission staff met with the PHED Committee, which approved all of the County Executive's recommendations. The Council is expected to approve the Amended CIP this spring.

- FY2012 Budget: Meeting scheduled today with Montgomery County OMB – operating budget numbers are very grim, will update Board in person at its Roundtable session.

Mary R. Bradford

Director

Montgomery County Department of Parks

The News in Depth

- Rock Creek Sewer– Final design plans are awaiting WSSC approval and will be bidding project in early March.
- Black Hill Renovation advertised for construction by end of February – Completing final design plans and expect to bid project March.
- Playgrounds -- we are pushing for permits to be processed more quickly as citizens complain about delays in installation. At times, new equipment is ready but the permits are stalled, leaving residents with roped-off or demolished playgrounds for an extended period.
- Both Ice Rinks hosted successful Sweetheart Skates this month.
- ParkPASS is working on adding Community Gardens to the database.
- Montgomery Parks is working with Prince Georges Parks and Recreation on an application for NRPA's National Gold Medal Award (the Commission has won 5 times, and had to take a 5-year hiatus so that others could compete.)
- Park Play Day at Cabin John Ice Rink was fully booked on January 17.
- The Klondike Derby hosted approximately 750 scouts and leaders at the Little Bennett Campground during the weekend of January 22nd and 23rd.
- Upcoming meeting with County to discuss connection of ICC trail to existing asphalt County constructed trails along Needwood Road, Muncaster Mill Road, and Emory Lane.
- Park rental houses are at 100% occupancy.
- On February 15, presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the Friends of Sligo Creek for their 10 years of support of Sligo and Montgomery Parks.
- 5 new Trail Rangers were trained for the Trail inspection program in early February.
- April 9th has been set as the big annual Park/Stream Cleanup Day this spring. We already have 15 cleanup sites, and expect many more. There will be a Volunteer site leader training at REI on March 1, sponsored by the Alice Ferguson Foundation.
- Park Police were involved in an incident this week that resulted in an off-duty County police officer shooting and wounding an individual after a traffic stop. Under investigation.
- Last night's Upcounty Vision 2030 public meeting went extremely well, great community feedback. We are getting close to the final product.