

**Department of Parks
Director's Report
Thursday, May 26, 2011**

Highlights:

- **Park Activity Buildings**
 - **Special Thanks to Marriott International for their “Spirit to Serve”**
 - **Move Underway at Darby Store**
 - **\$50,000 Bond Bill to Help at Poole’s Store Site**
 - **MCPS Projects Potentially Impacting Parkland**
 - **New Parks E-Newsletter: Come Play in the Parks!**
 - **A Few Park Project Updates**
 - **Park Police Updates**
 - **Brookside Gardens Partners with CVB on U.S. Open Promotion**
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Events

- NOW – SEPTEMBER 18—Wings of Fancy Life Butterfly & Caterpillar Exhibit, Brookside Gardens, South Conservatory, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm daily, www.BrooksideGardens.org.
- MAY 28—South Germantown Splash Playground opens for the season, www.SplashandGolf.com.
- JUNE 11—Children’s Fishing Day, Black Hill Boats, 8:30 am – 10:30 am, www.BlackHillBoats.com. Free cane pole to the first 25 kids who register and prizes for the boys and girls who catch the biggest, smallest and greatest number of fish. Black Hill Boats if also offering Lake Needwood customers with “Captains Club” cards \$5 off a boat rental at Black Hill Boats.
- JUNE 12—South Germantown Driving Range ParTee, 11:00 am – 3:00 pm, www.SGDrivingRange.com. The Driving Range opens to public use Friday, May 27.
- JUNE 18—Campfire for Dad, 8:30 pm, Little Bennett Campground, www.LittleBennettCampground.com. The campground is also offering “Stay and Play Special” coupons this season where you stay one night and get the second night free. Camper ready camping at Little Bennett Campground is also available, where our staff sets up the campsite with gear: 4 person tent, 2 chairs, propane stove and lantern.

Highlights

- In response to recent inquires, parks staff is exploring the possibility of issuing requests for proposals (RFPs) for many of the 11 closed park activity buildings. The public has expressed interest in operating childcare facilities and Spanish classes at some of the closed buildings. Related, the Recreation Department plans to operate their summer camp at the Seneca Day Camp Park Activity Building—one of the 11 closed last year. The Parks and the Recreation departments negotiated a rental fee of \$7,000 for the use of the facilities from June 15 - August 15. In addition, Garrett Park Nursery School requested to extend its stay in the Ken-Gar Park Activity Building for an additional 6 months to 1 year due to the construction schedule for their building in Garrett Park. The Nursery School temporarily re-located its operations to the Ken-Gar Park Activity Building last fall and planned to return to their home

after this June's school year concluded. However, the construction is not going to be completed until later, and the Parks has extended the agreement for up to one more year through next June, for a fee.

- On Wednesday, May 18, employees from Marriott International came back again to the parks to celebrate their "Spirit to Serve." Parks staff organized and led 8 different projects with over 250 volunteers. Projects included:
 - Installing tree protection around 60 trees on Beach Drive, south of East West Highway;
 - Non-native invasive plant removal at the service area at Brookside Gardens;
 - Wood chips spread on trails, nature activity area, and non-native invasive plant removal at Brookside Nature Center;
 - Weeding, mulching and park spruce up Caroline Freeland Park;
 - Non-native invasive plant removal along Croghan Lane near Little Bennett Regional Park;
 - Clearing away brush and a trash pickup at North Gate Park and Strathmore Park with the Mid-County Community Workgroup;
 - ½ mile of natural surface trail work, north of Randolph at Kemp Mill on the Rachel Carson Greenway; and
 - Spreading wood chips at Adventure Playground at South Germantown Recreational Park.
- The Darby Store in Beallsville has been braced and is being hoisted out of the right of way. Parks archaeologists are monitoring the work. *The Gazette* covered this issue its May 18, 2011 edition.
- Parks staff is using a \$50,000 bond bill award to proceed with the restoration of the Poole's Store Site.
- Our department continues to work with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) on several issues that may impact parkland. MCPS has many expansion or modernization projects in which we are currently involved. Key updates and decisions on these matters will be brought to the Board as needed. There has been a good deal of media coverage on the issue of proposed school sites on parkland: in WRC-TV, WUSA-TV, *The Gazette*, *The Washington Examiner* and others. Projects include:
 - Construction of a new middle school in the Bethesda Chevy Chase Cluster;
 - Construction of a new elementary school in the Northwest Cluster;
 - A potential change of site for a school in the Shady Grove Sector Plan area;
 - The modernization of Wheaton High School;
 - Co-location of our respective maintenance facilities from the Crabbs Branch Service Park to the Webb Tract; and
 - The search for a site to relocate the school bus depot from the Crabbs Branch Service Park.
- Come Play in the Parks, our revamped eNewsletter, was sent out to just over 30,000 people on Thursday, May 19. The email was well received and included content about the

Summer Guide, fun ways to enjoy the parks, upcoming events and features on Black Hill Regional Park, the South Germantown Driving Range and volunteer activities. This eNewsletter will be sent monthly and we will soon add an option to subscribe from our website.

- Park project updates:
 - Parks staff has replaced the HVAC system at Black Hill Visitors Center, using energy grant funds.
 - The Maple Wood Alta Vista playground installation is close to completion.
 - Construction is expected to begin on the Cabin John Regional Park Tai Chi Court this summer.
 - Parks staff has selected contractors for the Black Hill Trail renovation project and are currently awaiting notice to proceed. Renovation is anticipated to begin this fall.

- Park Police updates:
 - Park Police issued a criminal citation to a mother who left a young child in a vehicle at South Germantown Recreational Park, May 7.
 - Park Police discover two marijuana grow sites.
 - Park Police volunteered and participated in the following police week activities: Candlelight Vigil, Annual Memorial Ceremony at the US Capital, Police Unity Tour, and motor escorts for survivors and the annual Maryland fallen officers program at Delaney Valley Cemetery.
 - Park Police are actively participating in the first seat belt enforcement phase of the Law Enforcement Challenge Click it or Tick, which runs through June 7.
 - Park Police participated in the Matsunuga Milk Run at South Germantown Recreational Park on May 13, distributing information on child safety seats and air bags to 200 elementary and middle school students and 197 adults.

- Brookside Gardens is participating in the Conference and Visitors Bureau (CVB) U.S. Open Discount Card Program. The CVB created the discount card to promote Montgomery County businesses during the 2011 U.S. Open, June 13-19 in Bethesda. The discount card will be distributed to U.S. Open volunteers, ticket holders and residents in Montgomery County. The Gardens offered a 15 percent discount in the Marylandica Gift Shops (valid June 1 – June 30, 2011). This is wonderful exposure for the Gardens.

Mary R. Bradford

Director

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