

**Department of Parks  
Director's Report  
Thursday, July 7, 2011**

***Highlights:***

- **Darby Store Moved**
  - **Black Hill Trail Renovation Set to Begin**
  - **South Germantown Mini-Golf Construction Underway**
  - **Wheaton Ice Arena Gets New Sheet of Ice**
  - **New Volunteer Tree Stewards Off and Running**
  - **Discovery Channel Employees Make a Difference Volunteering in Parks**
  - **Heritage Days Recap**
  - **South Germantown Driving Range Par-Tee Recap**
  - **Additional Park Project Updates**
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**Events**

- JULY 23—Grand Opening Celebration for the Rock Creek Trail Bridge, Aspen Hill Local Park, 5013 Baltic Avenue, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon, [www.MontgomeryParks.org](http://www.MontgomeryParks.org).
- NOW – SEPTEMBER 18—Wings of Fancy Life Butterfly & Caterpillar Exhibit, Brookside Gardens, South Conservatory, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm daily, [www.BrooksideGardens.org](http://www.BrooksideGardens.org).

**Highlights**

- The Darby Store in Beallsville was moved out of the right-of-way and onto its new foundation. Parks carpentry crew will begin working to stabilize the building. I watched it being moved slowly along its rails, and it was quite a sight. Both the National Park Service and County Cable 6 were there to document the move of this historic structure. It is now protected from traffic and in a fortified spot (grainy cellphone photos attached).
- We received the final permit for the Black Hill Trail renovation project. Parks staff has received a good deal of interest and questions about this project from the surrounding neighbors. We anticipate the trail will be completed by next spring. A separate stream renovation project is also slated to start soon.
- Facilities management staff began demolition of one of the two South Germantown Mini-Golf courses, next to the Splash Park, in order to accommodate growing use of the latter. The project is ongoing but will not disrupt the operating hours of the facility.
- The ice surface at the Wheaton Ice Arena has been remade, a weeklong project of melting and breaking down the current ice sheet, repainting the floor with logos and lines and reapplying the ice.
- The inaugural class of 24 Montgomery Parks Tree Stewards was trained on June 1, 8 and 11.

- A Montgomery County dam drill exercise was held on June 9 with the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Montgomery Parks owns and operates several high-hazard dams on M-NCPPC property.
- Approximately 150 Discovery Channel employees volunteered at three sites in our parks on June 17. The volunteers:
  - Removed at least 70 bags of garlic mustard and mile-a-minute vine near the soccer fields on Sligo Creek Parkway, led by volunteer Weed Warrior supervisors and the Friends of Sligo Creek;
  - Weeded and mulched under many of the historic trees at Jessup Blair Local Park, supervised by Horticulture and Historic, Significant and Champion Tree staff; and
  - Worked on trails installing new sign posts, cutting back brush, and landscaping in Cabin John Regional Park and around Locust Grove Nature Center, led by Parks Trail Volunteer Coordinator Ben Sugar, Natural Surface Trails program staff Bob Turnbull and Steve Moxley, Locust Grove Nature Center Manager Marta Potter and Friends of Cabin John Creek Watershed.
- Heritage Days, June 25 and 26, in Montgomery Parks saw over 400 visitors to Oakley Cabin, the Underground Railroad Experience Trail, Dowden's Ordinary, Josiah Henson Special Park and Blockhouse Point. Clarksburg Day was celebrated as part of Heritage Days and staff from Little Bennett Regional Park participated and shared park information. Hyattstown Mill in Little Bennett was also open for Heritage Days with sawmill and wood turning demonstrations and the opening of the "Wood" exhibit.
- The South Germantown Driving Range re-opening and Demo Day on June 12 boasted 150 patrons. The community was reintroduced to the newly refurbished club house, chipping and putting surfaces. Some 65 patrons received a free bucket of balls. All enjoyed a variety of golf skill games and refreshments.
- The Tai-Chi Club had a groundbreaking for their new facility in Cabin John Regional Park. This has been a public-private partnership led by Michael Ma, Park Development Division.
- MCPS proposals for new schools on parkland, expansion of existing facilities into parks, and other similar initiatives have been the subject of much recent dialogue between M-NCPPC and the Board of Education, as well as various Parks staff contacts with MCPS. We have some areas of concurrence and others that are more difficult to resolve, and will keep the Parks Commission fully advised.
- We are assessing what the recent ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards and requirements will mean for our parks, 15 of which have been identified with deficiencies that must be corrected – although these Federal mandates are unfunded, we are trying to address these, plus additional park modifications also required under the law.
- Public amenities in White Flint are the subject of recent interagency charrettes and public meetings, assisted by park planning staff.

- We reviewed operational and use requirements and management options for the current on-going construction of passive use facilities at Woodstock Equestrian Park, and how this area will be managed and maintained (if at all) under current operating budget constraints.
- A few additional park project updates:
  - Construction is ongoing at the Wheaton Regional Park adventure playground: it should be open in mid-August.
  - Construction continues on the pavilion at Randolph Hills Local Park.
  - The Tai Chi Court in Cabin John Regional Park is under construction.
  - The new playground at Maplewood Alta Vista Local Park is complete and open to public use.
  - We completed extensive repairs to the basketball court at North Gate Local Park.
  - We replaced a pedestrian bridge at Sligo Stream Valley Unit.
  - Parkside HQ renovations are on-going and creating some employee disruption as we squeeze in more staff previously located in rented office space in order to save operating costs. Watch out for boxes, cordoned-off hallways, and moving materials if you visit, and verify meeting room location before you attend a meeting.
- We held a Povich Field summit with Bruce Adams of the Office of Community Partnerships and Big Train Baseball, Georgetown University (varsity team is a prime field user), various experts, and Parks staff to discuss how the field might be maintained better under the heavy use and poor weather conditions affecting optimal play on what should be a premier field.
- I spoke at or participated in community meetings or events regarding Capital Crescent Trail Coalition, Montgomery County Civic Federation, dedication of the Xeriscape Garden by D & R International at Woodside Park, and a celebration for the Sligo Creek Golf Association; and joined in the most recent national Urban Parks Directors' conference call on federal funding and budgetary challenges as well as attending the statewide meeting of Maryland's county park and recreation directors regarding Program Open Space (POS) funding outlook (in a word: poor.)
- We began the new Fiscal Year 2012 last Friday under even more grim management constraints than last year, including the sad release of some valued employees, yet we are hopeful that the public will understand as response time may lengthen to tackle problems and as park landscaping turns to mulch and gravel instead of annual flowers. All staff continue to perform at a high level.

*Mary R. Bradford*

*Director*

*M-NCPPC - Montgomery County, Department of Parks*