



Friends of Sligo Creek

Newsletter July 2019



Ellen X. Silverberg photo

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Join the Team for Monthly Invasives Removal

Our Remove Invasive Plants (RIP) Committee has scheduled a series of events throughout the park over the next four months.

The committee's goal is to combine the forces of its current corps of dedicated Weed Warriors with new recruits who will come to know the pleasures and value of ripping out unwanted species.



Wavyleaf basketgrass will be the focus on July 13. (Bay Journal photo)

Weed Warriors typically work in their own sections of the park, often alone or with a few helpers. In the coming months, the warriors will band together once a month to focus on a particular species in a particular spot. Once this effort proves to be successful, the RIP committee will schedule similar events at new locations within the watershed.

The summer and early fall schedule goes like this:

July 13: The target species is wavyleaf basketgrass (above). We will meet at the southern end of Colt Terrace in Section 9 (Kemp Mill). This is south and west of Arcola Avenue. As far as we know, this is the only site that we have this invasive grass in

Sligo. We don't want it to spread. We will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end about 10:30 a.m.

August 17: The target species is mile-a-minute (at right). We will meet in the soccer field parking lot across from the Sligo Creek Golf Course or in the Sligo Creek Golf Course parking lot. The work will be around the soccer field and nearby stormwater ponds. This is in Section 6 between Colesville Road and Forest Glen Road. Start at 8:00 a.m. and end about 10:30 a.m.



Mile-a-minute will be the focus on August 17. (University of Connecticut photo)

September 14: The target species is bush honeysuckle. We will meet in the parking lot at the intersection of the Sligo Creek Parkway and Kennebec Avenue. This is in Section 3 between Carroll Avenue and Piney Branch Road. From 9:00 a.m. to about 11:30 a.m.

October 12: The target this month is Japanese barberry (left). We will meet in the parking lot of the Kemp Mill Shopping Center. This is in Section 9 off Arcola Avenue. Start at 9:00 a.m. and end about 11:30 a.m.

For all dates, participants should wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and closed-toe shoes and bring their own water. RIP will



Japanese barberry will be the focus on October 12. (University of Connecticut photo)

provide gloves and tools as necessary. These are activities for teens and older.

Please contact Jim Anderson if you have any question at invasives@fosc.org.

- Ross Campbell, Remove Invasive Plants (RIP) Committee

Cleanup in Long Branch Draws a Crowd

Congressman Jamie Raskin and his staff joined dozens of others from the Potomac Conservancy and Friends of Sligo Creek to remove trash and pull invasive plants in Long Branch Park on June 15.

Henry Coppola of Montgomery Parks counted 58 volunteers who removed 20 bags of trash, 10 bags of recyclables, piles of invasive plants, and about 1,200 pounds of bulk trash, including 11 shopping carts.

Invasives were tackled by three groups led by FOSC Weed Warrior Supervisors Barbara Francisco, Jim Anderson, and Greg Odegaarden.

Barbara's group used a hefty weed wrench to remove wineberry from around the soccer field behind the community center.



Volunteers from Potomac Conservancy, Congressman Jamie Raskin, and Henry Coppola of Montgomery Parks

Another group pulled porcelainberry vines from trees and remarked, "This is a lot more fun than picking up litter!" Jim's group used clippers to make "windows" in the vines growing up trees around the soccer field.



FOSC's invasives chair, Jim Anderson (in hat), , and other volunteers in Long Branch June 15 (Montgomery Parks photos)

"It was a big help to Long Branch," Barbara reported, "and I appreciate Jim's and Greg's help and the volunteers who worked with them. The two men who worked with me had checked on a volunteer website to find out about the event, which lets us know that advertising these service projects county-wide is an important thing to do."

Another volunteer, Susan Alexander, said she's tired of trash in her neighborhood. "I found a little gap in the woods and I went in there" where she found "a motherload of beer cans, colt 45 bottles, and plastic bags."

Henry Coppola noted that, "What we are doing is kind of treating the symptom. It would be great if we could not have the trash show up at all."

-- Adapted from reporting by Karen Aguilar (localDMV.com), Henry Coppola, and Barbara

Francisco

Wildlife at Our Stormwater Ponds

Three stormwater ponds in the Sligo Creek watershed -- on Wheaton Branch, in Kemp Mill, and at the south edge of the Beltway -- support some of the most abundant and diverse wildlife in all of Sligo.

This past June, one of our most dedicated Sightings reporters, Dan Treadwell, observed a great variety of animals and their behaviors in two of these locales and took some tremendous photos (see below). To contribute your own nature sightings in Sligo (photos optional), go to <http://fosc.org/sightings.htm>.

The Kemp Mill stormwater ponds (as distinct from the nearby playground park) are located just north of University Blvd. and southwest of the shopping center. The Wheaton Branch ponds are



Great Blue Heron at the Wheaton Branch Ponds on June 26
(S. Davies photo)

located just south of Dennis Avenue and west of Inwood Drive. The Beltway ponds are between the soccer fields and the Beltway to the east of the creek.

For birds, by far the most diverse habitats in Sligo are at the Wheaton Branch ponds, located just south of Dennis Avenue and west of Inwood Drive. An astonishing 165 bird species have been documented there on the eBird website, 21 more than at the next most productive site in Sligo.

In the last few weeks, birders Stephen Davies and Robert Cantor have noted such rarities for Sligo as Red-eyed Vireo, Swainson's Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, House Wren, Green Heron, Chipping Sparrow, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, and Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers. On July 4, Stephen reported eight Wood Ducks and 17 American Goldfinch. To follow bird sightings at these ponds, go to [this page on eBird.org](#).

(All animal photos below by Dan Treadwell. Plant photos by Michael Wilpers.)



Black-crowned Night-Heron with prey at the Kemp Mill ponds on June 6. Dan reports that the bird swallowed the baby turtle whole.



Narrowleaf mountain mint (left) and narrowleaf sundrops (a daytime-blooming evening-primrose) lent color to the east bank of the Kemp Mill ponds on June 23.



A red-eared slider laid eggs near the Kemp Mill ponds on June 2 and, the same day, an American Bullfrog scanned its habitat at the Beltway ponds.



This Killdeer was seen on June 24 on the grassy berm that forms the southern edge of the Kemp Mill ponds.



Dozens of hedge bindweed (a native morning glory) bloomed along the northern-most berm at the Wheaton Branch ponds on July 7.



Two snapping turtles mating in the Beltway ponds on May 25. Their heads face each other in the foreground.

Need to Reach Us?

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Friends of Sligo Creek is a nonprofit community organization dedicated to protecting, improving, and appreciating the ecological health of Sligo Creek Park and its surrounding watershed.