

**Department of Parks  
Director's Report  
Thursday, March 31, 2011**

***Highlights:***

- **Meeting with White House Council on Environmental Quality**
  - **MRPA Landscape Site/ASLA Award for Dowden's Ordinary**
  - **Josiah Henson Special Park on National Register of Historic Places**
  - **Parks Tree Crews Respond to Storm Damage**
  - **North Branch Trail Facility Planning Underway**
  - **Brides on the Bus Event Shows Off Parks to More than 100**
  - **Friends Group Budding for Olney Manor Dog Park**
  - **Olney Manor Area Parks & the ICC**
  - **Nature Center Volunteers Recognized**
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**Events**

- **APRIL 1**—Opening day for many Montgomery Parks seasonal facilities: the Cabin John Train, Wheaton Train and Ovid Hazen Wells Carousel and Olney Manor Skate Park, [www.CabinJohnTrain.com](http://www.CabinJohnTrain.com), [www.WheatonTrainandCarousel.com](http://www.WheatonTrainandCarousel.com), [www.OlneyManorSkate.com](http://www.OlneyManorSkate.com)
- **Saturday, APRIL 2**—
  - Underground Railroad Experience Trail opens for season with guided hikes, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon, [www.HistoryInTheParks.org](http://www.HistoryInTheParks.org)
  - Opening Day Ceremony (Cong. Van Hollen expected), for Bethesda Little League, a park partnership at North Chevy Chase Local Park, 9:00 a.m.
- **Sunday, APRIL 3**—Sizdeh Bedar, Persian-American cultural festival, at Black Hill Regional Park. Attendance is expected to be approximately 5,000 to 7,000 people. This is the 17th year the Black Hill parks staff has worked with this group.
- **Wednesday, APRIL 6** – D.C. United Soccer Game, at SoccerPlex Stadium, South Germantown Recreational Park. Attendance is expected to be approximately 4,500 people.
- **Thursday evening, APRIL 7**—FY 13 -18 Biennial CIP Public Forum, MRO Auditorium.
- **Saturday, APRIL 9**—
  - Oakley Cabin African American Museum & Park opens for season with guided cabin tours also “Songs of the South” opening day celebration, 12:00 noon – 4:00 pm, [www.HistoryInTheParks.org](http://www.HistoryInTheParks.org)
  - Cabin John Spring Ice Show, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm, [www.CabinJohnIce.com](http://www.CabinJohnIce.com)
  - Gas and Steam Show, Friends of the Agricultural History Farm Park, 1 p.m.
  - Dedication of Emory Grove Community Garden, 10 a.m.
- **APRIL 17** – Earth Day! Many volunteer cleanup events in Montgomery Parks
- **APRIL 23**—Olney Manor Skate Park Party, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm, [www.OlneyManorSkate.com](http://www.OlneyManorSkate.com)
- **APRIL 30**—South Germantown Driving Range ParTee! 11:00 am – 1:00 pm, [www.SGDrivingRange.com](http://www.SGDrivingRange.com)

## Highlights

- On Tuesday, March 15, I met with the White House Council on Environmental Quality, which has principal responsibility for implementation of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors (AGO) report. There are several significant initiatives in the AGO report relating to urban parks and urbanized counties. These include a new "Urban Parks and Community Green Spaces Initiative;" new "community-scale recreation destinations;" transportation and trail linkages; a new commitment to youth employment and creation of a Conservation Service Corps; and more.
- We won the Maryland Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA) Landscape Site/ASLA Award for Dowden's Ordinary Special Park. The award will be presented during a ceremony at the MRPA Annual Conference in Ocean City on April 14.
- We received approval on our submitted National Register application for Josiah Henson Special Park, making "Riley House" now officially designated on the National Register of Historic Places. Internally, we have also begun facility planning for the park.
- Parks tree crews have been working hard to respond to more than 350 work requests generated in response to recent wind and rain storms. Our arboricultural section staff, including tree crews, is also offering to complete tree work for the Revenue Authority to address hazardous storm damage on Sligo Golf Course. We are still working to fill one vacant Tree Climber II position, important to our ability to ensure public safety.
- We have received 16 proposals for the North Branch Trail Facility Plan. This trail will be a continuation of the Rock Creek Trail, located on the east side of Lake Frank, to connect to the ICC bike trails. This project includes removal of unused parking lots. The proposals received are presently under review and we expect to have a consultant on board in April.
- Our Brides on the Bus event, Sunday, March 13 was a huge success, with more than 100 participants on the buses and a number of walk-ins to the Montgomery Parks event center venues. Participants were pleased and commented that they could have never seen five venues and 50 vendors on their own in one day—and thankful we did the driving. The event was covered by *The Gazette*, *The Associated Press* and the *Monocacy Monocle*.
- Parks staff is working to resolve the mud issue at Olney Manor Dog Park in response to user complaints. (This was an ICC-associated project.) A Friends of Olney Dog Park volunteer group is also beginning to take shape to help with maintenance at the dog park.
- Parks staff in the Olney Manor area is working with the State Highway Administration to review ICC projects impacting parklands at Olney Family pond, Llywellyn fields, Woodlawn Barn and Peachwood Neighborhood Park.
- On Saturday, March 12, volunteers from Montgomery Parks' four nature centers were recognized for their contributions at a special luncheon attended by the Director and other top

Parks staff. In 2010, 250 volunteers contributed more than 11,600 hours of service to our nature centers. Service awards ranged from 5 to 15 years of volunteer service.

- Olney Manor staff is assisting the Enterprise Division with the transfer of the Skatepark from the Recreation Department and will ensure that lighting and bleachers are installed; and the general clean up will be done by the Olney Manor staff.
- Parks staff has been involved in the site selection process for a new school in the BCC cluster – the BOE deferred a vote on the site preferred by MCPS, which is at Rosemary Hills, and which impacts both parkland and an adjacent community center. No word yet on the next steps, but we will be meeting with MCPS.
- Park staff has been approached by County officials regarding possible site selection on parkland for a minor league baseball stadium, -- we will keep the Board apprised.
- As spring gets underway, we are receiving calls from citizens regarding noise from the Blair High School stadium (a shared park/school site) and concerns about outdoor tennis court maintenance, which we are attempting to address within our limited funding.
- Staff is participating in workshops and many interagency and citizen meetings regarding concerns about artificial turf and its alternatives, and we will report to the Board at some future date on the status of those discussions.
- Staff is actively involved in the latest efforts with the State of Maryland “No Child Left Inside” initiative, and is tying that program into our restructuring of the nature center and school nature programs, “Nature Everywhere.” State officials with the “Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature” recently toured our Brookside Nature Center’s Children’s Nature Discovery Area as a model site.
- We appear to have a tenant for the Poole’s Store house, and business is reportedly booming at the store site with the new vendor.
- Our “Weekend Manager On Duty” rotational roster for the spring and summer seasons is complete, providing as much coverage as we can during the heavy use periods.
- I continue to speak many evenings per week before civic and citizen associations, and our staff is being called upon more frequently to discuss park matters with various interest groups as budget and funding issues become more prominent in the public debate.

*Mary R. Bradford*  
*Director*  
*Montgomery County Department of Parks*

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Additional items of interest:

- Completed Interim Archaeological Report on Oakley Cabin, assembling information from decades of research.
- Presented testimony before the General Assembly on three bond bills: Poole's Store, Brainard Warner, and a Brainard Warner amendment.
- Received concept drawings for the rehabilitation of the Bussard Farm Kitchen at Ag. History Farm Park.
- Announced the spring calendar for interpretive public events at historic sites and commenced 2011 training of docent corps using new techniques based on input from Colonial Williamsburg via grant.
- Participated in production of newly released CD: Life in a War Zone: the Civil War in Montgomery County, featuring several Park-owned historic sites.
- Several staff members at the Olney Manor Recreational Park attended a one-day workshop on artificial turf maintenance in Baltimore, MD on Friday, March 11.
- The Montgomery County Road Runners Club, Inc. held another successful Greenway Marathon and 50 K Race on Saturday, March 5. The race started at the Damascus Recreational Park and ended at Riley's Lock.
- Staff is currently renovating infield #1 at the Olney Manor Recreational Park.
- Continuing education: Arboricultural section will be attending certified arborist training on all aspects of practical tree care during the week of March 14th.
- Facility Management has moved the modular building form Plum Gar to the South Germantown Recreational Park Driving range