

**Department of Parks  
Director's Report  
Thursday, November 29, 2007**

**Office of the Parks Director**

- The interview I taped in July with WETA-TV (PBS) for its WETA Guide show on unusual attractions in the region airs for the first time tonight, November 29, at 8:00 pm. The half hour show will feature the department's Riley Farm/"Uncle Tom's Cabin" and will rerun at least once again on Friday, November 30 at 10:30 pm. It will also be available online at [www.weta.org](http://www.weta.org).
- With the Department of Recreation and County Executive Ike Leggett, the Maryland Senior Olympics were welcomed to Montgomery County, which will be hosting their 2008 Games. Montgomery Parks will be seeking upcounty venues for their events.
- Recent top management selections for the Department of Parks include:
  - David Vismara, Chief of the Horticultural Services Division;
  - Brian Woodward, Chief of the Southern Region Division;
  - Christine Brett, Chief of the Enterprise Division.

*Many thanks to Karen Warnick, Steve Chandlee, and all those who served very ably in acting assignments during the transition process.*

- Park Police activities include:
  - Park Police from both counties hosted and conducted three NFL Pepsi Punt, Pass and Kick competitions on November 3 and 4. About 34 Montgomery County kids participated in the competition and 10 kids from the Park Police sectionals advanced to compete to represent the Redskins in the Team Championship at FedEx Field on December 2.
  - Arrests were made in the death of the male subject killed on Sligo Creek Parkway. It appears the killing was in retaliation to arson at a Laurel apartment complex.
  - Park Police responded to the murder-suicide at Unity Neighborhood Park over the Thanksgiving weekend. The incident received widespread media coverage: *The Washington Post*, WTOP-FM, *The Gazette*, WJLA-TV, more.
  - In response to both critical incidents, Park Police are working on increased community outreach plans to reassure park neighbors and share crime prevention and emergency contact information.

**Events**

- DECEMBER 7—Watch as local skaters show off their skills at the Cabin John Ice Rink Holiday Show from 6:30 – 9:30 pm. Admission is free. Non-perishable food donations will be accepted. Great fun for the whole family
- DECEMBER 22—Wheaton Ice Arena's Winter Ice Show from 7:00 – 9:00 pm. Skaters will perform their routines. Free admission. Bring the whole family.

**Management/Administration**

- The Northern Region welcomed two new staff members to the Black Hill Area, Anthony Dorsey and Leslie Tobery.
- Park managers are busily refining the program based budget and providing additional information requested by the Planning Board.

- Parks staff met with the Western Area Advisory Board, Thursday November 15 at Norwood Park.
- On December 1 contractors will be conducting onsite visits to Parkside and the Montgomery Regional Office building to bid on the custodial contract.

### **Park Planning**

- Park Development completed the design services RFP for artificial turf for the existing rectangular field at the Blair High School stadium. Installation of the artificial turf is scheduled to begin in summer 2009, but is also contingent on an agreement between M-NCPPC and Montgomery County Public Schools for community use of the field.
- Park Development is also nearing completion of design for the artificial turf field at the Fairland Recreational Park, installation of which is scheduled to be completed before the end of 2008.

### **Baseball and Softball**

- Parks staff and contractors are rebuilding aprons at Povich Field, resetting irrigation heads and improving soil conditions of aprons to improve drainage.
- Local park ballfield crew is removing soccer goal posts and inspecting and replacing field number signs to ensure that users are reporting to their properly permitted fields.
- The ballfield turf at Bradley Local Park was renovated by a contractor. The field is snow fenced to keep the public off until it is re-opened next fall.

### **Camping**

- Parks staff is re-graveling the camping sites at Little Bennett.

### **Trains, Carousels**

- Parks staff is breaking down from the Halloween program, 1200 cans of food have been sorted and are ready to distribute to local food shelters.
- The process to buy the new Wheaton train engine has begun.

### **Maintained Open Space**

- Parks staff has begun leaf removal in most maintained park areas.
- Parks staff is testing and fitting snow equipment for the season.
- *The Parks Show* filmed the snow equipment at the Meadowbrook Maintenance Yard on November 14 for its winterizing-the-parks themed show in December.

### **Picnic Shelters**

- Bathroom renovations at Olney Mill and Georgian Forest shelters are complete. Parks central maintenance staff is waiting for Use and Occupancy Permits.
- Parks staff continues to replace structural columns on older shelters.
- Parks staff will begin renovating the Wheaton Regional Park grill area after the leaf season.

### **Playgrounds**

- The playground renovation at Black Hill Regional Park is underway. Parks central maintenance staff is replacing the old wood structure near Shelter I.

- *The Gazette* ran an article about playground renovations at Leland Neighborhood Park in Chevy Chase.
- The playground at Wheaton Regional Park will be renovated next fall. Parks staff has closed several slides and removed a swing set due to safety concerns. Due to the scheduled renovation, this playground equipment will not be fixed. Parks staff is posting signage and conducting outreach to notify park patrons about the playground plans and renovation schedule.
- Parks staff is preparing to seal identified CCA-treated wooden structures annually in response to concerns about arsenic—starting first with South Germantown’s Adventure Playground.

### **Dog Parks**

- Parks staff is installing new Mutt Mitts dispensers at the Black Hill Dog Park to deter theft and working with regular dog park users to keep an eye out on Mutt Mitt theft.

### **Park Activity Buildings**

- Parks staff has completed the roof at the North Four Corners recreation center.
- Work on the roof, ceiling and lights at Lynnbrook recreation center is scheduled for December.

### **Group Picnic Areas**

- The Cabin John Group Picnic area restrooms have been winterized and will be closed (as usual) until the spring.

### **Scenic Parkway Experiences**

- Park inspectors and staff are addressing drainage problems along Little Falls Parkway. A drain near Dorsett Avenue has been unclogged and citizen’s drainage issues addressed.

### **Trails - Paved Surface**

- Parks staff has repaired and resurfaced Bauer Drive.

### **Arboriculture**

- Parks landscape crew will begin tree planting season next week.
- The Cabin John landscape crew will be planting approximately 600 trees along the Matthew Henson Greenway.

### **Natural Resources Management**

- The department launched its Wild Montgomery initiative—a partnership with the Audubon Naturalist Society, National Park Service and others to celebrate the county’s natural resources and educate the public about their protection. A new website about the initiative is up and running, [www.WildMontgomery.org](http://www.WildMontgomery.org) and *The Washington Post* (Montgomery Extra) mentioned the new campaign in last week’s edition. November’s episode of *The Parks Show* is also all about Wild Montgomery and includes an interview with campaign partner the Audubon Naturalist Society, Senior Naturalist Stephanie Mason.
- Parks staff assisted the Maryland Wood Duck Initiative group in surveying/repairing nesting boxes on Little Seneca Lake.

### **Archaeological and Historic Site Management**

- Parks staff has completed path repair at Acorn Park.

### **Trails - Natural Surface**

- Because of the season, trail work across the county has increased.

### **Agricultural Support**

- Painters are working on the Corn Crib at the Agricultural History Farm Park. The contractor has finished painting the barn.

### **Nature Centers**

- A new roof was installed at Brookside Nature Center and the exterior painted.
- Parks staff set up the photo/art exhibit at Locust Grove Nature Center November 16 – 18 and removed vines park volunteers had cut.
- The department's strategic plan for the nature facilities, written in October 2004, is in the process of being updated with input from both managers and naturalists. Accomplishments in the past 3 years as well as future goals have been discussed and will be included in the new version of the plan. The nature facilities anticipate presenting this plan to the Planning Board/Park Commission in February 2008.
- Brookside Nature Center now has 100 registered volunteers that have gone through initial orientation, fingerprinting and most through the e-learning. A volunteer newsletter has been created, designed and published quarterly. The newsletter is sent to all Brookside Nature Center volunteers.
- Brookside naturalists are focusing on a new effort to reach out to neighboring schools to introduce them to nature center programs. The naturalists are also welcoming input from the teachers on inserting nature into school student projects.
- Brookside staff is working with parks exhibit shop to design and install 4 interpretive natural history plaques around the pond boardwalk loop.
- Parks staff has begun installing 4 new raised gardens to highlight planting native plants for butterflies and hummingbirds.

### **Public Gardens**

- Parks staff has completed repairs to the Koneman House (Administrative Offices) at Brookside Gardens; and installed new roofs on the Fritz Greenhouse, the sunpit and Anderson Island gazebo.

### **Archaeology and Historic Site Interpretation**

- November 17, the parks archaeology program with the Archaeology Society of Maryland, Mid-Potomac Chapter, hosted a Certified Archaeological Technician (CAT) Program, which included Maryland Historical Trust Terrestrial Archaeologist Dr. Charles Hall presenting the laws, regulations and history of Maryland Archaeology.

*Mary R. Bradford*

*Director*

*11/29/2007*