

**Department of Parks
Director's Report
Thursday, November 10, 2011**

Highlights:

- **Parks Department Celebrates Maryland Emancipation Day**
- **Agricultural History Farm Park Hosts Montgomery County 4th Graders**
- **Open Houses at Event Centers**
- **Brookside Nature Center Hosts Apple Festival**
- **Cabin John Train, Wheaton Train and Carousel Wrap Up Successful Halloween**
- **Park Staff Take Part in the Montgomery County Bicycle Ride Along**
- **Wall Park: MAC Re-naming Ceremony Honors Shriver Family**
- **Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature**
- **Disaster Planning and Recovery Training**
- **Update on Snow Removal Plans**
- **Rail-Volution 2011 Conference and White Flint**
- **Capital Improvements and Maintenance Update**
 - **Parks Capital and Major Maintenance Projects; ICC-Related Park Projects; Playgrounds; Tree Crews Report**
- **Managed Deer Hunts Begin**
- **Parks Volunteers Celebrate Community Service Day**
- **NRPA-Atlanta: Congress Report**
- **Urban Park Directors National Meeting**
- **Awards and Honors**

EVENTS

- NOW – NOVEMBER 20 – Chrysanthemum Display, Brookside Gardens, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm daily.
- NOVEMBER 11—Veteran's Day Skate, Cabin John Ice Rink, 8:00 – 10:00 am, 12:30 – 2:30 pm, 4:30 – 6:00 pm, and 8:00 – 10:00 pm. Free Skating for Veterans and their families.
- NOVEMBER 11 – Veteran's Day Skate, Wheaton Ice Arena, 12:30 – 2:30 pm, 4:15 – 6:00 pm, and 8:00 – 10:00 pm. Free Skating for Veterans and their families.
- NOVEMBER 12 – Maryland, Virginia and D.C. Private Schools Cross Country Championship Races, Agricultural History Farm Park
- NOVEMBER 13—Wounded Warrior 5K Race, Agricultural History Farm Park, 7:00 am – 11:00 am
- NOVEMBER 16 – Free Nature Matters Lecture: Monarch Butterfly Migration, Meadowside Nature Center, 6:30 – 8:30 pm.
- NOVEMBER 18 – “Keep your Neighbors Warm” Clothing Drive and Skate, Cabin John Ice Rink, 8:00 am – 10 am, 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm, 4:30– 6:00 pm and 8:00 – 10:00 pm. Skate for \$3.50 when you bring new or gently used winter clothing.
- NOVEMBER 18 - “Keep your Neighbors Warm” Clothing Drive and Skate, Wheaton Ice Arena, 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm, 4:15 – 6:00 pm, 8:00– 10:00 pm. Skate for \$3.50 when you bring new or gently used winter clothing.

- NOVEMBER 19 – Montgomery County Road Runners Club, Stone Mill 50 Miler, Greenway Trail and Muddy Branch Trail, 7:00 am – 7:00 pm.
- NOVEMBER 19 – Downtown Silver Spring Thanksgiving Day Parade, 10:00 am (See Montgomery Parks trucks, float and Park Police Mounted Unit)
- NOVEMBER 20 – Pacers Running Store, Don't Panic Montgomery County 5K, Sligo Creek Parkway, 8:00 am – 10:00 pm.
- NOVEMBER 21 – Montgomery County Road Runners Club, Candy Cane City 5K, Meadowbrook Local Park, 7:00 am – 11:00 am
- NOVEMBER 25 – JANUARY 8 – Garden of Lights, Brookside Gardens, 5:30 pm – 9:00 pm Monday – Thursday; 5:30 pm – 10:00 pm Friday – Sunday. Advance Tickets: \$20. Cars/Vans: \$20 Monday – Thursday; \$25 Friday – Sunday.
- DECEMBER 3 – Weed Warriors, Little Falls Trail, 8:00 am - 10:00 am.
- DECEMBER 10—Cabin John Skating Spectacular, Cabin John Ice Rink, 6:15 pm – 9:30 pm. Come see the skating stars of Cabin John make magic on the ice! Free and fun for the whole family. Please bring donations of non-perishable food items for people in need. www.CabinJohnIce.com
- DECEMBER 10 & 11—Christmas on the Farm, Noon – 5:00 pm, Agricultural History Farm Park
- DECEMBER 17 - Weed Warriors, Little Falls Trail, 8:00 am - 10:00 am.

NEWS

- The Parks Department celebrated **Maryland Emancipation Day** last weekend, November 4th – 6th. Events were held throughout the County, starting with the Underground Railroad Experience Trail Night Hike where costumed re-enactors provided live interpretation along the trail. Other events included demonstrations, tours, archaeological digs and special programs at Oakley Cabin and Josiah Henson Special Park. This marked the 15th year that Montgomery Parks has celebrated Emancipation Day.
- More than 2,000 4th graders from Montgomery County Public Schools participated in the **“Close Encounters with Agriculture”** program. As part of that program, students spent two weeks at the Agricultural History Farm Park learning all about agriculture.
- More than 175 spectators attended **open houses at Woodlawn Manor and the Agricultural History Farm Park**, enjoying tours of both facilities. **“Do It Yourself” Wedding Workshops** will be held at Rockwood Manor November through April to help current and potential event center renters learn about wedding planning, budgeting, selecting a caterer and more.
- Brookside Nature Center hosted the **“Celebrate Apples”** festival on October 16, welcoming more than 300 attendees who learned how to make cider, cider syrup, caramel apples and apple crafts.
- **Cabin John Train and Wheaton Train and Carousel** wrapped up their popular Halloween events, including the “Eye Spy” Halloween Train for kids under eight and the “Howl-o-Ween” train rides for dogs and their owners at Cabin John Regional Park and the Haunted Train and Creepy Carousel, for kids eight and older, at Wheaton Regional Park. Both

attractions were a big hit with the community again this year, with the Cabin John Train offering expanded hours to accommodate more riders. The train stations at both parks will remain available for holiday parties throughout the winter; the trains will open again on weekends beginning March 31st.

- Park staff joined in the **Montgomery County Bicycle Ride Along**, led by the Montgomery County Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (PTSAC) and the Washington Area Bicycle Association (WABA) with assistance from Montgomery County Planning Board Commissioner Casey Anderson. The ride demonstrated how cyclists use the County's bicycle facilities for recreation, transportation and commuting. After the ride, attendees participated in a debriefing to discuss what was observed on the trip.
- Park staff joined County Executive Isiah Leggett, Council President Valerie Ervin, Council Vice President Roger Berliner, Planning Board Chair Françoise Carrier, the Montgomery County Recreation Department, members of the Shriver Family, and representatives of the Special Olympics to celebrate the renaming of the Montgomery Aquatic Center at **Wall Park** to the Eunice Kennedy Shriver & Sargent Shriver Aquatic Center.
- Brookside Gardens hosted a committee meeting for **Governor Martin O'Malley's "Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature"** initiative. The Department continues to work with the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to bring more nature education and opportunities to our children.
- Parks staff attended a free INFRAGARD training at the Community College of Baltimore County where they learned about **disaster preparation and recovery** for both public and private sectors. Other topics included continuity of operations, shelters and working with FEMA.
- A joint meeting was held with the Department of Parks and the Department of Public Works and the Department of Transportation to coordinate this year's **snow removal and ice treatment work**. Upon request from the County, the Parks Department furnishes snow removal equipment and drivers and is reimbursed on a monthly basis. In return, the County provides the Department of Parks with free sand and salt. All departments are currently looking for a down-county site to store sand and salt for each incident. Our Fleet Management section is currently performing preventive maintenance on the Parks Department's snow removal equipment.
- Parks staff presented the approved park and open space concept from the White Flint Sector Plan to a group of planning and design professionals attending the **"Rail-Volution 2011"** conference in Washington, D.C.
- The **Rock Creek Regional Park staff and Park Police** coordinated detention of several individuals riding four-wheelers and 4x4 trucks in the Hawlings River Stream Valley.
- Parks' **Proposed FY13-18 Capital Improvements Program** (CIP) was submitted to the County Executive and Council on November 1. The proposal is for \$178.1 million over 6

years for capital projects, a modest increase of 4.1 percent from the currently approved FY11-16 CIP, which stands at \$171.1 million. Meetings to review the CIP with the Office of Management and Budget and the County Executive will take place in December.

- **Parks Capital and Major Maintenance Projects Updates:**

- Construction on the Woodstock Equestrian Park and Darnestown Park started in October.
- The final stage of the Lake Needwood dredging project is scheduled to be completed in November. This includes grading, seeding of spoils area, and planting of trees, shrubs and aquatic plants.
- The foundation for the Armstrong Cabin, which was moved from Tilden Woods to Cabin John Regional Park, has been completed. Minor repairs to the house have been made, and the cabin will be placed on its new foundation soon. The cabin was built by renowned Bethesda physician Charles Armstrong during the Great Depression. Once operational, the cabin may host some information on Charles Armstrong's life and his work.
- Reforestation work is ongoing near Kensington Cabin to enhance the buffer along the creek.
- Turf renovation at Shirley Povich Field has begun.
- A new above-ground fuel pump at Martin Luther King, Jr. Recreational Park is operational and a project to renovate lighting at the park has begun.
- A homeless encampment was removed at Becca Lilly Neighborhood Park.
- The 65% architecture and 35% interpretive design sets for the Woodlawn Barn Visitors Center project were delivered to the Maryland Historical Trust for review.
- Black Hill Trail renovation: 25% complete
- Takoma-Piney Branch Park: 50% complete
- East Norbeck Park renovation: 30% complete
- Josiah Henson House- begin painting interior
- Major roof leak at Brookside Ed. Center will lead to a re-roof of an entire area.

- **ICC – Related Park Projects Updates:**

- Currently there are a total of twelve ICC ES/CM/CS projects being constructed on parkland. Parks staff continue to review these plans to help guide design and reduce impacts to park's natural resources.
- Construction of the ICC environmental mitigation project (PB-114A) in Peachwood Neighborhood Park is underway and scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2012. A new stormwater management pond will be built in this park to reduce erosive stormwater runoff and protect water quality and in-stream habitat in the Good Hope Stream. In addition, a new basketball court and smaller parking area will be built.

- **Playground Updates:**

- Playgrounds at Nolte Local Park and Little Falls Local Park have been completed and are open to the public.
- The playground at Capital View-Homewood Local Park is currently under construction. Construction of playgrounds at Manor Oaks Local Park, South Germantown Regional Park, and Stewarton Local Park is scheduled to begin in December.
- Wheaton Adventure Playground is open: however, several elements are currently closed off due to faulty materials. Replacement parts have been ordered.

- **Parks Tree Crews Update:**
 - Tree crews led by Tree Maintenance Supervisor Donnie Osborn and Climber II Alvaro Fuenzalida worked closely with Park Managers Jeff Brightwell and Mike Little to complete highest priority tree work requests in the Olney Maintenance area. The completed work requests in the Olney area included approximately 12 service requests from Hurricane Irene requiring over 90 man/hrs to complete.
 - Tree crews are currently working on the highest priority requests in parks located in the Shady Grove area. Tree Crews led by Donnie Osborn and Climber Gary Krot began a 2-week stay by completing some high priority removals at the Needwood Lake Boat House and also Meadowside Nature Center's Smith Center "Confidence Course." Both of these areas have extremely high visitor traffic and activity. The work is of a preventative nature and will greatly reduce the risk of injury and or damages resulting from possible tree failures.
 - Tree crews led by Donnie Osborn and Climber II Brian Stanco will work with Park Managers Dean Turnbull and Art Nelligan from November 11th - 23rd to complete the highest priority work requested in South Germantown and Little Bennett Parks.
 - Members of the Tree Crew, along with Woody the Tree, will be marching alongside a piece of Montgomery County Parks aerial lift equipment in the Silver Spring Thanksgiving Parade on Saturday November 19th.
 - 42 Tree Stewards have been monitoring and reporting on their respective parks.

- The first **managed deer hunts** of FY12 began this past week at Hoyles Mill Conservation Park, Woodstock Equestrian Park, North Germantown Greenway and Great Seneca Stream Valley Park. Hunts are scheduled next week for Rachel Carson and Blockhouse Point Conservation Parks. The full hunt schedule is available at parksdeermanagement.org. This marks the 16th year for our managed hunt program; the Maryland DNR holds the Montgomery Parks Department's program as a model for other counties.

- We are reviewing the rather sparse response to our recent REOI for seven **under-utilized park activity buildings**, but since there has been some community interest, we are preparing to go forward with an RFP and step up our outreach process.

- The **M-NCPPC/MCPS Joint Working Group** has met twice. The school site selection process and other matters affecting both Parks and Planning have been on the agenda.

- A one-year, grant-funded **Volunteer Maryland Coordinator** has joined the Cultural Resources Stewardship section through an Americorps program coordinated with the Volunteer Services Office. Karen Lee is a talented and enthusiastic professional who will be working with Oakley Cabin, Underground Railroad Experience Trail and Josiah Henson site. The goal is to offer weekday programs for school children and senior groups through a focused volunteer program.

- Volunteers helped celebrate **Community Service Day** October 22 in various parks including:

- A cleanup along several locations of Rock Creek and its tributaries, coordinated by the Rock Creek Conservancy. 100 volunteers, including members of LDS Church and the CLOVIS group, collected nearly 150 bags of trash.
 - The Neighbors of Northwest Branch held a cleanup along the Northwest Branch Trail with 15 volunteers from the Blair High School Crew Team.
 - The Little Falls Watershed Alliance coordinated a Non-Native Invasive removal event at Norwood Park with 31 volunteers.
 - 10 volunteers from Green Wheaton and the Wheaton VFW hosted a park cleanup and mulched beds at Wheaton Veterans Park, collecting 10 bags of trash.
 - A new corporate volunteer group, American Society of Health System Pharmacists Green Committee, held a park cleanup at Elm Street Park.
 - Our newest Weed Warrior Supervisor, Steve Dryden, led a plant attack at Hillmead Local Park in Bethesda with help from employees from the North Face Store, and the Sandy Spring Builders, LLC.
- A few Parks staff were able to attend this year's three-day **National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) 2011 Congress and Exposition** in Atlanta last week. All agree it was a very rewarding and educational experience, and excellent value for the relatively inexpensive cost. Over 7,000 park and recreation professionals are estimated to have been in attendance.
 - While in Atlanta, I also attended the **Urban Park Directors** summit meeting where one of the main topics was the "Occupy Wall Street" movement, which really ought to be called "Occupy Parks". Dozens of jurisdictions report immense problems with tent cities, sanitation problems, police activity and general public disruptions in public parks.
 - The **ParkStat/SmartParks merger** continues to involve a great deal of staffing support.
 - Recently retired Parks Archaeologist **Dr. James Sorensen** was honored with the William B. Marye Award at the Archaeological Society of Maryland's Annual Meeting. This award was created in 1983 to honor individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Maryland archeology. Jim served as a Park Archaeologist for 23 years before retiring in May 2011, and was honored for his contributions to Maryland Archaeology, including the work before and during his tenure as the M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks Archaeologist.

Mary R. Bradford

Director

M-NCPPC - Montgomery County, Department of Parks

11/10/11