



Friends of Sligo Creek

Newsletter Jan/Feb 2024



Photo by Xavier Courouble

In this issue:

Litter Cleanups - Kudos to YOU!

Walks, Talks, and Interests

Litter HotSpot Cleanups - President's Day Weekend

New FOSC Videos

Weed Warriors Pull Another One

Upcoming Events & Volunteer Opps

Still not on the FOSC Listserv?

FOSC Store T-shirts, ball caps

Winter Salt Monitoring Teams Find High Levels of Salt in the Creeks

Recent Nature Sightings

FOSC SETS THE RECORD, AGAIN

Litter Clean Ups - Kudos to YOU!

FOSC learned last week that of all the watershed organizations that held cleanups in Montgomery Parks in 2023, **FOSC earned the #1 spot for volunteer hours and litter removed!**

"It is simply incredible! On behalf of Montgomery Parks, I'd like to thank **all FOSC Volunteers, Sligo Stewards and Weed Warriors** for your incredible stewardship and support in 2023." --*Valeria Espinoza, Watershed Cleanups Volunteer Coordinator*



How did we do it? Thanks to you! FOSC extends heartfelt thanks to our hundreds of volunteers - 885 to be exact - who came out to clear Sligo, Long Branch and nearby parkland of plastic, glass, metal, treated wood, tires, furniture, toys, bikes, and a whole lot more. You have made a huge difference to the water quality, plants, and health of the critters - the fish, salamanders, birds, mammals - who live in and around the creeks.

In 2024, let's continue our commitment to a healthy, thriving ecosystem for the benefit and enjoyment of all, today and in the future.

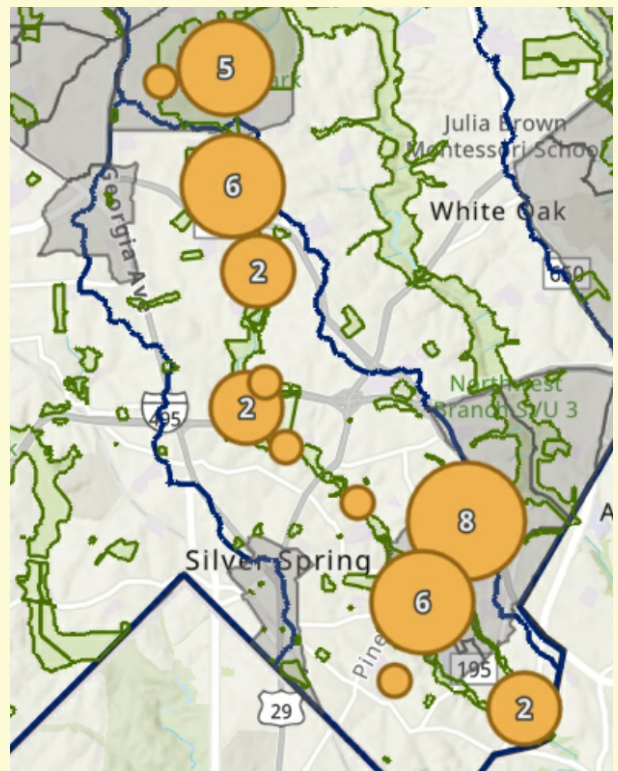
Metric	FOSC in Parks	Sligo Watershed Total
Clean ups organized:	Organized 36 cleanups in 17 MoCo Parks	Organized 77 cleanups in 25 MoCo Parks
Bags of Trash Removed:	Removed 494 large trash bags and 61 large recycling bags	Removed 864 large bags of trash and 76 large recycling bags
Pounds of Trash Removed:	Removed 15,200 lbs. of trash in total	Removed 30,000 lbs. of trash in total
Pounds of Oversized Items Removed:	1,100 lbs. of oversized items	3,000 lbs. of oversized items
Volunteers:	885 volunteers made it happen	1,460 volunteers made it happen
Volunteer hours:	1,827 volunteer hours	2,877 volunteer hours
Equity Focused Areas Served:	42% of cleanups were in Parks Equity Focus Areas	?

FOSC events took place throughout the watershed, from the headwaters of Sligo in Wheaton to downtown Silver Spring, to Long Branch, and Takoma Park.

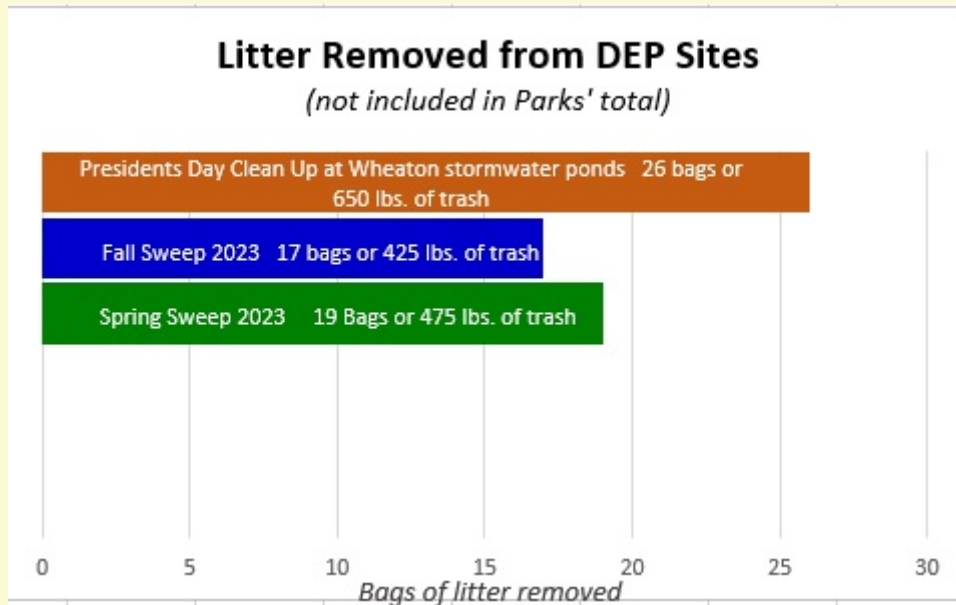
More than 42% of FOSC cleanups were in Park's Equity Focus Areas.

FOSC volunteers also cleared 62 bags representing 1,550 lbs. of trash from DEP-managed properties at the Wheaton stormwater ponds and the Kemp Millll stormwater ponds.

Our trash cleanup grand total is 556 bags and 16,750 lbs of trash.



FOSC cleanup events in parks, 2023



A big shout out to Ed Murtagh, FOSC Vice President, who coordinated the litter cleanups for FOSC including the major Spring and Fall Sweep the Creek events, and who led FOSC volunteers to an amazing #1 in the County for litter removal.

Thank you, Ed!

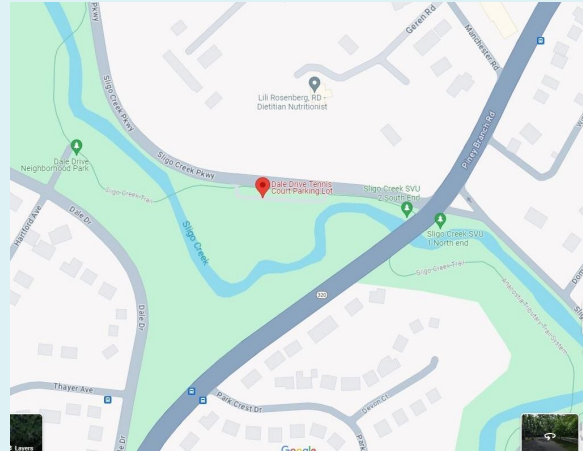
President's Day Weekend Litter Hot Spot Cleanups

Sun, Feb. 18th and Mon, Feb. 19th

Sligo Creek Parkway at Piney Branch Rd.

Sun, Feb. 18th, 1pm - 3pm

Meet at the tennis courts just before Piney Branch when traveling east. Parking is limited at the tennis courts. You can park on surrounding streets and walk to the meetup point.



Click on the map for a larger version.

Sligo Creek Trail at East/West Highway (Rt. 410)

Mon, Feb. 19, 12pm - 4pm

This area accumulates litter from upstream, and roadway and illegal dumping. We appreciate your help to prevent the litter from flowing further downstream into the Anacostia River and Chesapeake Bay. Meet up at the trail on the north side of East/West Highway, at 1600 East-West Highway. (lat/long 38.974061, -76.982378). If you've never been to the Kestral Meadow at the Pepco powerline, or Takoma Branch, this is a good opportunity to visit them.

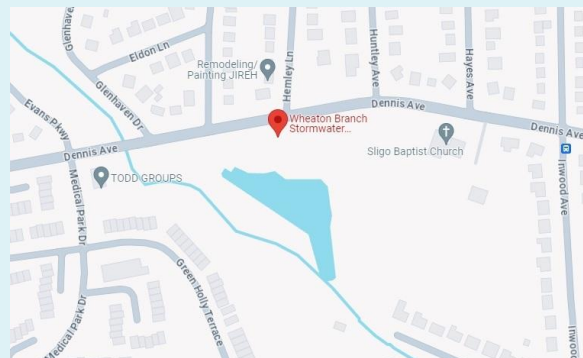


Click on the map for a larger version.

Wheaton Branch Ponds Dennis Ave. at Hemley Lane

Mon, Feb. 19, 10am - 12pm

The Wheaton Branch stormwater ponds support a wide variety of birds and wildlife. They collect litter, too, from upstream, and drive-by and on-site dumping. Enter the pond complex across from Hemley Lane.



Click on the map for a larger version.

At all sites, there is ample parking on nearby residential streets. Students can earn service learning hours -- please bring the paperwork with you. Gloves, trash pickers, and collection bags will be provided. **In case of inclement weather, check the Main FOSC listserv, or the [FOSC website](#) before heading out.**

Continuing adventures in litter



No, it's not mulch in that bag...Nick in action at Breewood Park.

Just days prior to MLK Day, before the weather turned cold and snowy, I discovered a considerable amount of litter at Breewood Park which is just east of Sligo Creek Parkway along University Boulevard. I collected over 150 gallons of litter including dozens of plastic bottles and a lot of pieces of polystyrene. I was glad to get this all picked up before it ended up in Sligo Creek.

I hope you will lend a hand at one of the Hot Spot Mini Sweeps we're holding in Sligo Creek on President's Day weekend. Whether it's 30 minutes or 3 hours, your efforts are really helpful to reduce the trash in these hot spots and show polluters that these areas are cared for, not a "no-person's" land.

--Nick Clements
Litter Hot Spot Coordinator
litterhotspots@fosc.org

The current list of litter hot spots includes:

- **Wheaton Branch stormwater ponds**
- **Long Branch around Piney Branch Recreation Center**
- **Long Branch at Garland Park**
- **Sligo Mill Park at Sheridan St.**
- **Sligo Creek at East/West Highway**

Do you know of others? Contact Nick at litterhotspots@fosco.org.



Above: Plastic bottles along the trail in Breewood Park (N.Clements photos)

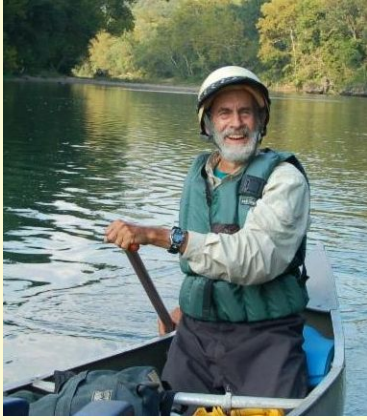
FOSC SETS THE RECORD, YET AGAIN

Weed Warriors Pull Another One

2023 was a record-breaking year for Sligo Weed Warriors

Sligo Creek watershed Weed Warriors did themselves proud in 2023, logging the most hours of any watershed in MoCo: **3,553 hours** or 28% of the MoCo total!

Sligo Weed Warrior Ed Gertler garnered the top number of hours of any Weed Warrior in the county for the second year in a row: **822**



**Ed Gertler
822 hrs.**

"Ed without his (Weed Warrior) clothes on."

#1 in Weed Warrior hours in MoCo - 822 - for the second year in a row! Congrats, Ed!



**Barbara Francisco
271 hrs.**

"Introduced to weed warring by Sally Gagne, a founding member of FOOSC, I value meeting and spending time with great people, enjoyable exercise, a suspension from the cares of daily life, a sense of accomplishment and (soon!) the sightings of spring ephemerals. As my NY mother-in-law used to say, "What's not to like?""



**Greg Odegaarden
251 hrs.**

Greg has led a Weed Warrior group in mid sligo for more years than anyone can count.



**Ross Campbell
212 hrs.**

"There are few better ways to simultaneously enjoy the beauty of Sligo Creek and contribute to its health than being a Weed Warrior. "



**Walter Mulbry
147 hrs.**

"It's a very physical activity but one that compels you to look more closely at all of the plants around you, listen to the nearby stream and birds, and enjoy the community of your group."



**Ed Murtagh
147 hrs.**

"I get my motivation by seeing all the progress we have made in protecting Sligo's ecology by working together. We have a great group of Weed Warriors."

Thank you, all.



Ruth Noel
114 hrs.

"Working with my fellow weed warriors is such a joy and during the pandemic kept me sane."



James Gulley
102 hrs.

James has jumped right in, leading Weed Warriors in several additional areas of Sligo and Long Branch.

What a huge difference WWs

make in our watershed!

3,609 trees

thank you too.

Weed warriors removed an amazing number of non-native invasives from our parklands:

Sligo Creek: 2,748 WW hours

Long Branch: 805 WW hours

Total Reported: 3,552 hours

certified WWs who worked the Sligo/Long Branch watershed: 90

non-certified volunteers who participated in WW events in the Sligo/Long Branch watershed: 365

pounds of trash removed: 1,700

trees freed from NNI vines in the watershed: 3,609

2024 Top 5 Non-Native Invasive plants WWs reported removing in Sligo Creek/ Long Branch

Porcelainberry:	563
Bush Honeysuckle:	514
English Ivy:	414
Multiflora Rose:	378
Wineberry:	304

Weed Warrior observation from the field:

Italian Arum is roaring back in the parkland and neighborhoods along Sligo and Long Branch this year.

Though it looks like something that could have come from a florist, Italian Arum is most definitely not a plant to keep. It chokes out native plants, offering little to no food value to hungry deer and other animals, or to pollinators, increasing food pressure on the remaining plants in the park and in neighborhood yards. It out-competes even



Above: Some Italian arums have obvious white veins on the leaves, others do not.

Below: An Italian arum spreading in a private garden in Arlington, Va. Note the root spread by daughter

other invasives.

It spreads rapidly from a single plant to form many clumps and is very hard to remove completely. FOSC Weed Warriors have marked experimental "removal plots" each using a different removal method to see which most effectively removes the plant and all its little daughter tubers. Italian Arum has moved along the invasives curve from "emerging" to "exponential growth" in our area. On the west coast, it is rampant. For now, Weed Warriors are removing it by careful digging 6-8" below the soil line, and marking the site with a flag so newly sprouting tubers can be spotted easily.

Please dig it out of your yard, being careful to take surrounding soil in order to get the baby tubers, and bag and trash it.

tubers from the main plant (left) underneath a paver to establish a new plant (right).



(Photo courtesy of Arlington Regional Master Naturalists)

Please be sure to view the entire newsletter including the Recent Nature Sightings by clicking on "View entire message" or similar text at the bottom of your browser.

FOSC LISTSERV

What?..Still not on the FOSC Listserv? We really, really want you to join!

(How about a t-shirt or ball cap?)

A few months ago we talked about different ways to get information about FOSC -- the "one-way" messages from FOSC to our members such as the Newsletter, and the "two-way" conversations on the FOSC listserv that anyone can initiate -- and asked you to join the FOSC listserv so you can get real-time information about what's going on in Sligo Creek. Thank you to those of you that answered the call and joined the listserv!

Many people don't realize that the FOSC member-only email list is separate from the two-way listserv messages, and folks need to join each one separately. That means only the people on the listserv received the last-minute message cancelling the recent MLK mini-sweeps due to the snowy

weather. These time-sensitive notices are important to get to you quickly.

There's a simple remedy—join the main FOSC Listserv. Just send an email to:

FriendsOfSligoCreek+subscribe@groups.io

It's not a lot of mail and it's moderated so you won't get spam.

We know it's an extra step to join the listserv, but we **REALLY** want you to join. It will help us keep in touch and converse in real time. We can't automatically add you; you have to opt-in.



*Elaine Lamirande
FOSC President*

So to sweeten the deal, we're going to put the names of everyone who joins FOSC or the listserv over the next few months into a hat. We'll draw a name periodically and the winner will get their choice of a free FOSC short-sleeve t-shirt or ball cap! So what are you waiting for? Join the listserv today!

-- Elaine Lamirande

Join FOSC or sign up for the main FOSC listserv & you'll be entered to win a t-shirt or a ball cap.



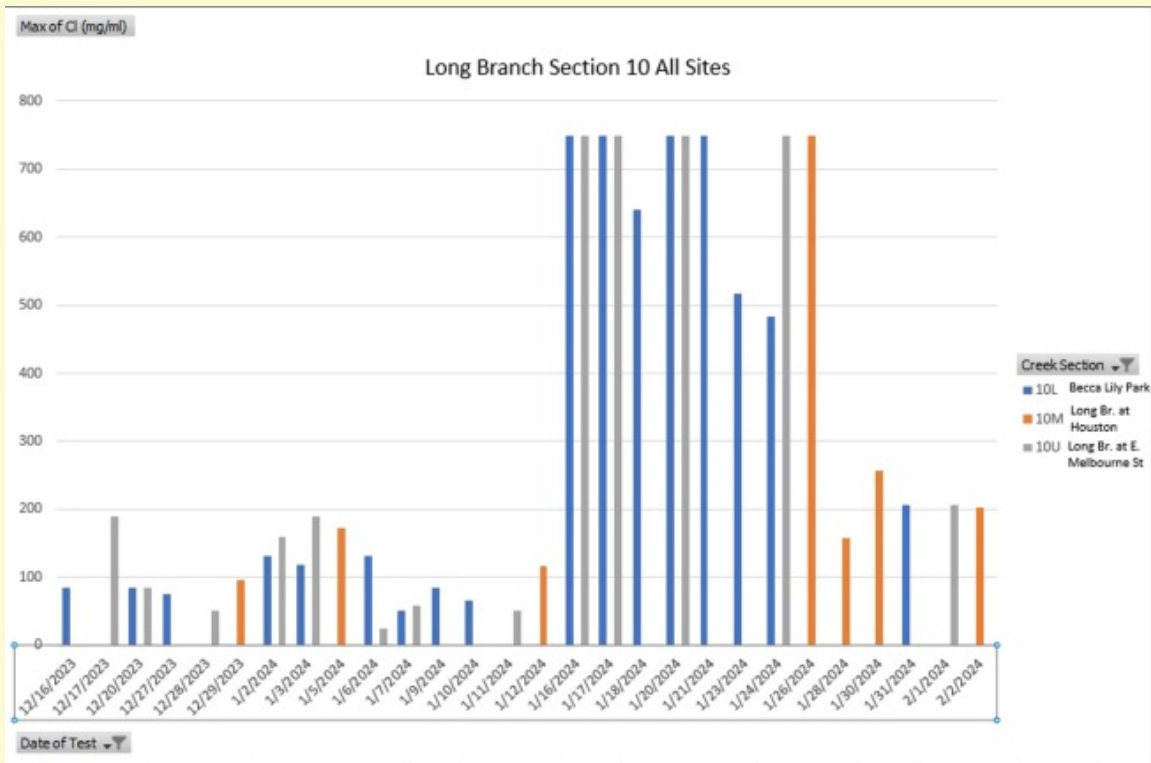
WATER QUALITY/SALT MONITORING TEAMS

FOSC's Winter Salt Monitoring Teams Find Very High Salt Levels in the Creeks

Over the past three weeks, two winter storm events and a big thaw have sent a tremendous amount of chloride into Sligo Creek, Long Branch, and their tributaries. Chloride (Cl) is a common in the type of salts used to try to keep roads, parking lots, and sidewalks clear during snow, sleet, and ice storms.

The recent storm events saw brining and salting of roads and parking lots by a varied set of County, State, and local road crews. Many local schools, businesses, and residents added to the mix as they spread salt on their sidewalks, driveways, and public spaces.

As the snows melted and the rains came, large amounts of chloride entered our waterways. At moderate and high concentrations, chloride can harm and even kill plant and animal life in freshwater streams. This winter, FOSC Salt Monitoring teams have found very high chloride levels in both Sligo Creek and Long Branch, all the way from the headwaters of Sligo in Wheaton to the confluence of the two waterways just upstream of the PG County line. At most FOSC Salt Monitoring sites, these very high readings persisted in the streams for about two weeks, lasting considerably longer than either the brining/salting applications or the storms themselves. Across the watershed, chloride has leveled off higher than the baseline reading on 12/16/2023, perhaps reflecting the presence of salt in groundwater and soil.

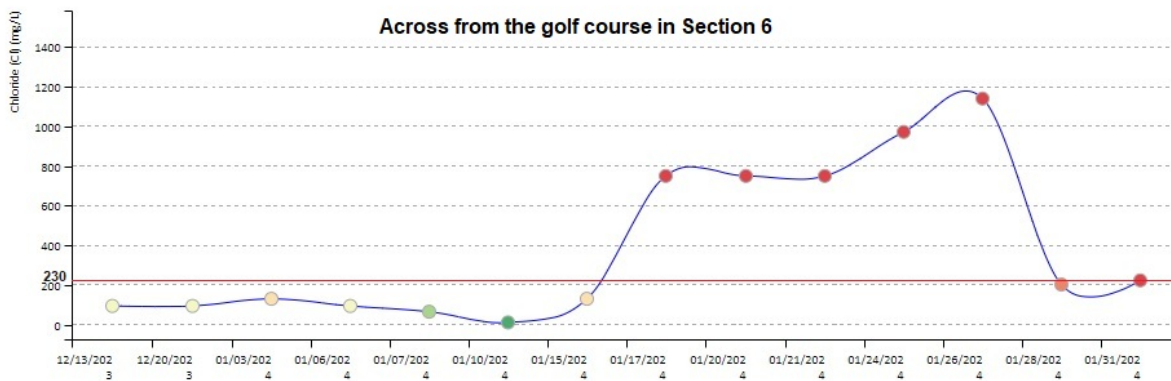


Salt monitoring data by FOSC salt testing team volunteers. (Graph by Mimi Abrehet, testing team member.)

This Long Branch graph, above, shows a typical salt "bump" from the storm in the first week of January. On Jan. 16th, the morning after region-wide salting was completed for the recent large storm, the chloride levels shot up and stayed up for 13 days, until Jan. 28th.

Within a few days of the storm, we realized that the salt levels exceeded the capacity of the regular test strips to report it. The protocol we follow (per the Izaak Walton League of America [IWLA], whose SaltWatch program supplied the regular test strips) called for an assumed maximum chloride level of 750 mg/L when using the regular low-concentration chloride test strips.

The FOSC WQ team quickly sought funding for high-salt test strips to determine the actual chloride levels during the remainder of this unexpected high salt spike. Thanks to a generous donation from a tester and from annual FOSC donors (thank you!), we were able to purchase them and make them available to our testers as soon as possible.



(FOSC data, graphed on CleanWaterHub.org)

For the first few days after the snowstorm, the regular low-concentration test strip readings were capped at 750 mg/L chloride as this chart of chloride readings shows. When high-concentration chloride test strips were used from 1/25-1/28, the readings more accurately reflected the chloride levels at 1,000 mg/L and some as high as **2348** mg/L. Rain on 1/28 diluted the chloride levels.

Note: click on all graphs to see a larger version.

Quantab Units	%NaCl	ppm(mg/L) Cl ⁻	Quantab Units	%NaCl	ppm(mg/L) Cl ⁻
1.4	0.005	31	4.8	0.037	224
1.6	0.006	37	5.0	0.040	242
1.8	0.007	43	5.2	0.043	260
2.0	0.008	50	5.4	0.046	280
2.2	0.009	58	5.6	0.050	301
2.4	0.011	66	5.8	0.053	323
2.6	0.012	75	6.0	0.057	346
2.8	0.014	85	6.2	0.061	370
3.0	0.016	95	6.4	0.065	396
3.2	0.018	106	6.6	0.070	423
3.4	0.020	119	6.8	0.075	453
3.6	0.022	131	7.0	0.080	484
3.8	0.024	145	7.2	0.085	518
4.0	0.026	159	7.4	0.092	556
4.2	0.029	174	7.6	0.098	596
4.4	0.031	190	7.8	0.106	641
4.6	0.034	206			

QUANTAB® Test Strip

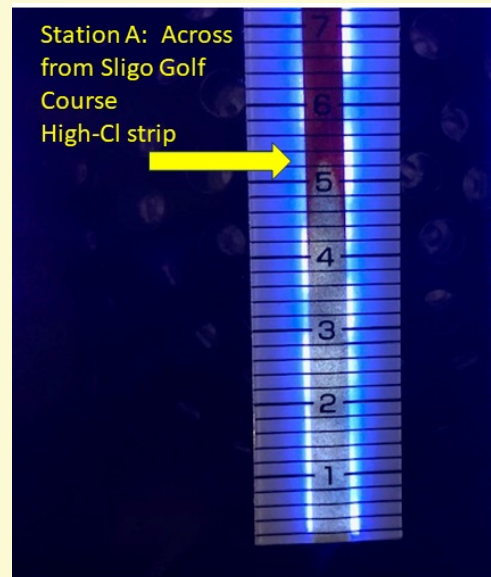
Linea amarilla

Punto máximo blanco

Fecha de vencimiento: 08/2025 Lot A3192A

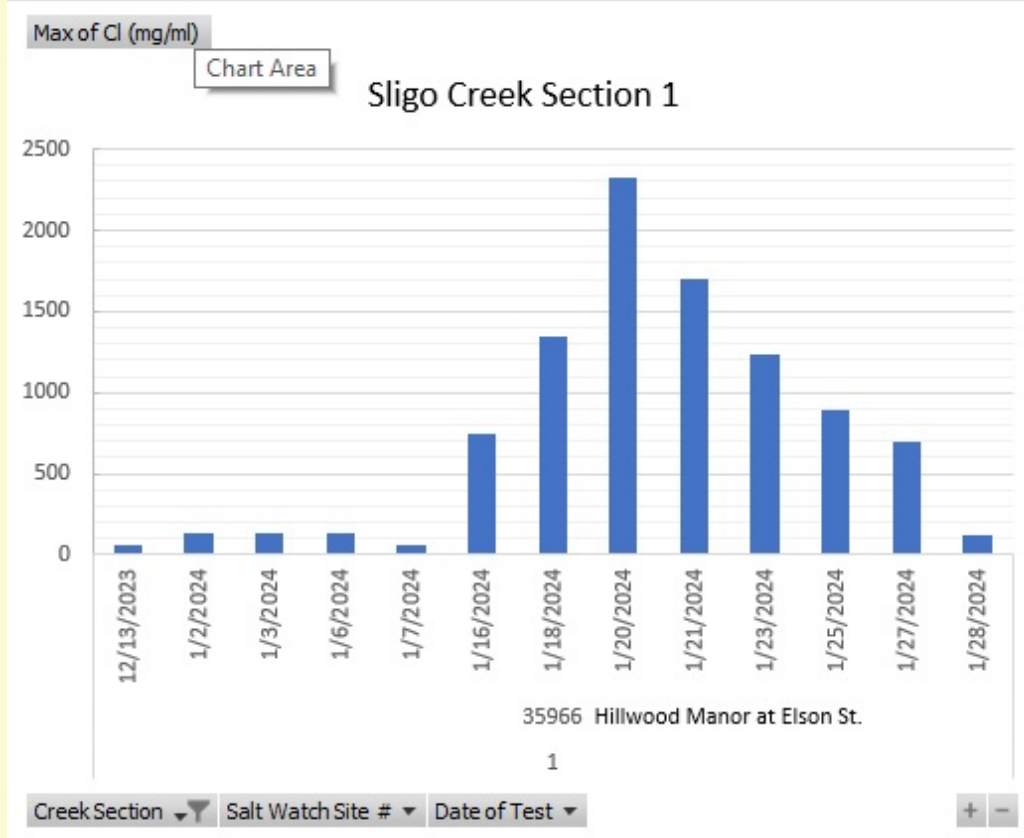
WHEATON BR.

This low-concentration test strip reads 9.6 Quantab units, well above the 7.8 Quantab limit for conversion to chloride values. This test was recorded as 750 mg/L Cl per the IWLA protocol.



The high-concentration test strip reads 5.2 Quantabs, or 1140 mg/L chloride, for the Section 6 site above on 1/26/2024.

FOSC year-round monthly testing team member Dean Tousley had a few high-salt strips on hand and captured the dramatic rise in salt levels in Section 1 starting on Jan. 16th. At its peak, the chloride levels were some 3 times the assumed 750 mg/L maximum. (see below)



According to the EPA, [chloride can be toxic to aquatic life](#), depending on the species, if it is present chronically at levels above 230 mg/L. A short exposure to chloride at 860 mg/L may also be lethal to some aquatics if it occurs more than twice in a three-year period. We hope that this recent salt spike was atypical and that the creeks haven't been widely subject to salt levels of this magnitude and duration within the last 3 years.

Our testing in the two prior years did not reveal major salt events anywhere close to these levels.

In February 2021, however, the monthly Water Quality testing team did discover a fish and amphibian kill in Flora Lane creek involving more than 200 corpses, almost certainly caused by salting runoff from the Beltway and Georgia Ave.



Fish kill on Flora Lane in Feb. 2021.

The County and State contend they are making concerted efforts to reduce the amount of brine and salt used for these storms. Nonetheless, in the three years of monitoring, the Salt Monitoring team has never recorded sustained chloride readings anywhere near this high before. It appears that more work needs to be done with regard to best management practices and resetting driver expectations for the winter salting and brining of roads, parking lots, and sidewalks.

Through other monitoring programs, we will assess the impact of the high chloride levels on macroinvertebrates, fish and other aquatics living in these streams this Spring. Check the Water Quality pages on the FOSC website for more findings as they become available.

--Pat Ratkowski, WQ Committee chairperson

Note: We need salt testers in Sections 7 and 8 (Forest Glen to University Ave) and in Section 10M, mid-Long Branch. Email the FOSC Water Quality Committee at wq@fosc.org if you're interested.

FOSC PROGRAMS

2024 Walks, Talks, and Interests

What do you want to do with FOSC this year?

We're lining up some great walks and talks for this year, but our planning would be even better if we address things that you're wondering about!

Do you want to go on a wildflower walk? Interested in learning the latest about spotted lanternflies? More about invasive plants? Want to know about the human and environmental impact of synthetic turf? The Water Watchdog program? Tell us and we'll try to make it happen!

Maybe you see a need in the watershed that should be addressed – let us know about it! One of FOSC's big projects last year was installing new kiosks in Long Branch and Prince George's County. We expanded our reach to these previously underserved areas because someone like you saw a need and spoke up.

Is there a neighborhood festival or local event where FOSC could reach out? Is your business or school green team looking for a project? Or do you, or someone you know, have expertise you would like to put to use in the watershed?

We rely on members like you to be our eyes and ears in the community. If you have an idea for a program or see an unmet need, let us know at info@fosc.org so we can look into it. Thanks.

--The FOSC planning team

FOSC DOCUMENTARIES

FOSC YouTube Channel

**FOSC Member
Accomplishments
in 2023**

**Skunk Cabbage is
emerging about
now**



Missing snow?

Highlights reel of 2023 FOSC projects. Get inspired by what your neighbors have been up to! Join us in 2024.

A simple meditation on winter in the park

See these and other videos on the [FOSC YouTube Channel](#).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Upcoming Events & Volunteer Opportunities

Watch the [FOSC Home page](#) and the [FOSC Calendar of Events page](#) for additional FOSC programs and volunteer events.

Litter Hot Spot Clean Ups Presidents Day Weekend, Feb. 18 and 19

- **Sligo Creek at Piney Branch** , Dale Drive Tennis Courts, Sunday, Feb 18th, 1pm - 3pm
- **Wheaton Stormwater Ponds**, Dennis Ave across from Hemley Lane, Monday, Feb. 19th, 10am -12pm
- **Sligo Creek Park at East/West Highway (Rt. 410)**, 1600 East/West Highway, Monday, Feb. 19th, 12pm - 4pm

See the article and maps earlier in this newsletter for details

Talk on Early Botany in Sligo Wed, March 13, 7:00 pm via Zoom

Learn about the dozens of botanists who explored Sligo between 1876 and 1920, and the plants they found here, in a **Zoom talk by Michael Wilpers, FOSC chair of natural history, on Wed,**

March 13, at 7:00 pm. The [Zoom link is available here](#) and will also be posted on the [FOSC website home page](#) and on the [Calendar of Events](#) page at the beginning of March.

Between 1876 and 1920, at least 40 botanists in the Washington area traveled to Sligo, taking advantage of new train and trolley routes to collect plants from our rich flora. One of the most appealing sites was probably the “Takoma bog,” a magnolia swamp that disappeared soon after 1920 and whose location is still the subject of active speculation.



A special cage is all-important in securing the best photographs of Wild Flowers, assuring freedom from air currents

Homer D. House (above) collected plants in Sligo in 1904 and 1905. He's shown here demonstrating his technique for photographing plants in the field (Flower Grower, 1917)

These early botanists collected more than 700 specimens, all preserved at the herbaria of the Smithsonian and the University of Maryland. In addition to the bog, their collecting targets ranged from the floodplains near Forest Glen Rd. to Sligo's confluence with the Northwest Branch in Hyattsville.

This talk is presented as part of the 20th anniversary of John Parrish and RG Steinman's "Native Plants of Sligo," published in 2003 on the FOSC website. A second edition is forthcoming, fully updated with current scientific names and classifications and new plant sightings over the last 20 years. For further information contact naturalhistory@fosc.org.



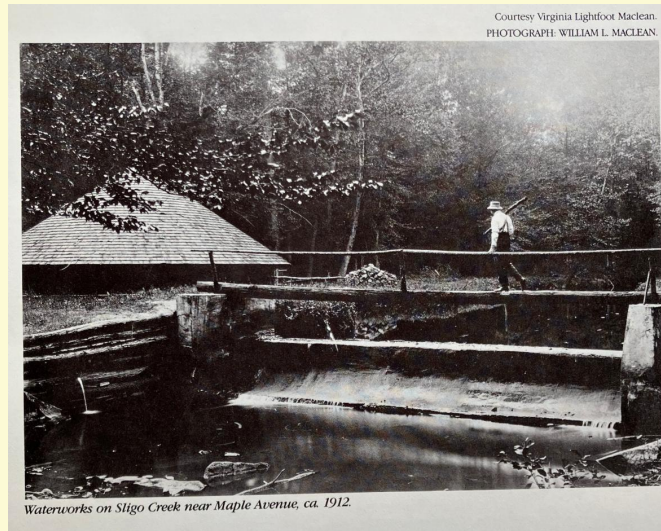
Cinnamon Fern collected in Sligo in 1876 by Lester Frank Ward. This plant is now in Sligo found only at the Kemp Mill stormwater ponds and an acidic seepage wetland in the powerline meadow.



American Climbing Fern (Hartford Fern) labelled as collected from the "Sligo swamp" in 1876 by J. W. Chickering. He taught "natural sciences" at the National Deaf-Mute College (later Gallaudet University). The fern is now rare in Maryland.

Walk through historic Takoma section of Sligo Sunday, March 24, at 1:00pm

Come on a walk with Bruce Sidwell through the historic Takoma section of Sligo Park! Discover attempts from 1890 until 1930 to exploit the beauty and other resources of Sligo Creek. These include a short-lived Resort, a Bookie Joint, a drinking water pond, and more! We will meet at the picnic pavilion near the intersections of Flower, Garland, and Sligo Parkway at 1:00pm.



More on Salt

SaltWatch volunteers needed

in Section 7 (Forest Glen to Dennis), Section 8 (Dennis to University), and Section 10M (mi d-Long Branch). Contact wq@fosc.org if you can help out. Thanks.

Salt pile reporting

Is the snow over for the season? Who knows...be

ready to report excessive salt usage - salt piles in the street, on sidewalks, in parking lots - to 311 in MoCo and PG Counties, and/or to FOOSC at salt@fosc.org.

Be Salt-Wise! It's Easy as 1-2-3

1 Shovel Right Away

2 Use Less Salt
Melts 10 Sidewalk Squares

3 Sweep & Reuse

Learn more at MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/salt

The graphic features three numbered steps: 1. Shovel Right Away (with a shovel icon), 2. Use Less Salt (with a salt container icon and text 'Melts 10 Sidewalk Squares'), and 3. Sweep & Reuse (with a broom icon). It includes logos for Montgomery County and the Department of Environmental Protection.



Above: 23 lbs. of salt ended up on the sidewalk after the street intersection was salted in several passes by the salt truck. An aware neighbor noticed, swept it up for later use, and reported it to 311. The salt contractor will hopefully receive additional training.

Be Salt-Wise: Residential salting adds to the burden of salt in the creeks. Use it sparingly.

Thank you very much for your year-end and year-round support of FOOSC!



**Your gift is greatly appreciated!
If you haven't donated, this is a great time to do so
because we're planning our 2024 programs.**

**If you prefer to write a check, please send it to:
FOOSC, P.O. Box 11572, Takoma Park, MD 20913. Thank you.**

FOOSC STORE

Show your FOOSC pride! Step out in style this Spring

FOOSC t-shirts, caps, mugs, and posters

FOOSC tees are made of soft, organic cotton - with a great message! This is the one you will wear all the time. Short and long sleeves in 5 sizes, small to XXL, green and

Kiosk Posters are \$15 each. **Mugs and window clings** (for a car or home window) are available too.

blue. The short sleeve tees are \$22 - \$24.
The long sleeved tees are \$26 to \$28.

Ball caps are the latest addition to the store. They're adjustable, embroidered, made of 100% cotton, and can be had for \$18.



The new FOSC ballcaps in a classic low profile style in light blue and dark green. 100% cotton with the FOSC logo embroidered on the front. (S. Deford photo)

Order from this link to the [FOSC store](#), or through the link on the upper right tab of the [FOSC homepage](#). You can have you order mailed or opt to pick it up locally. All sales support FOSC programs.
Thank you.



The FOSC t-shirts are 100% organic cotton and stay super soft. (J. Kassovic photo)

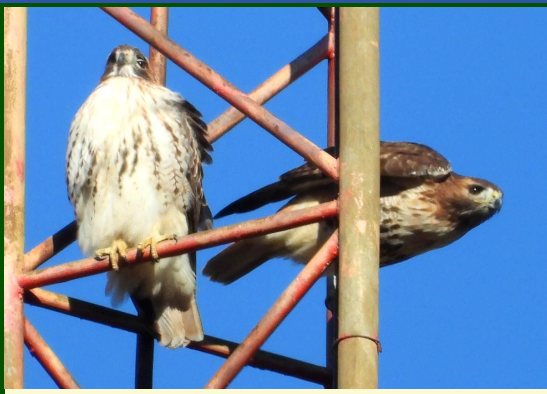
NATURAL HISTORY

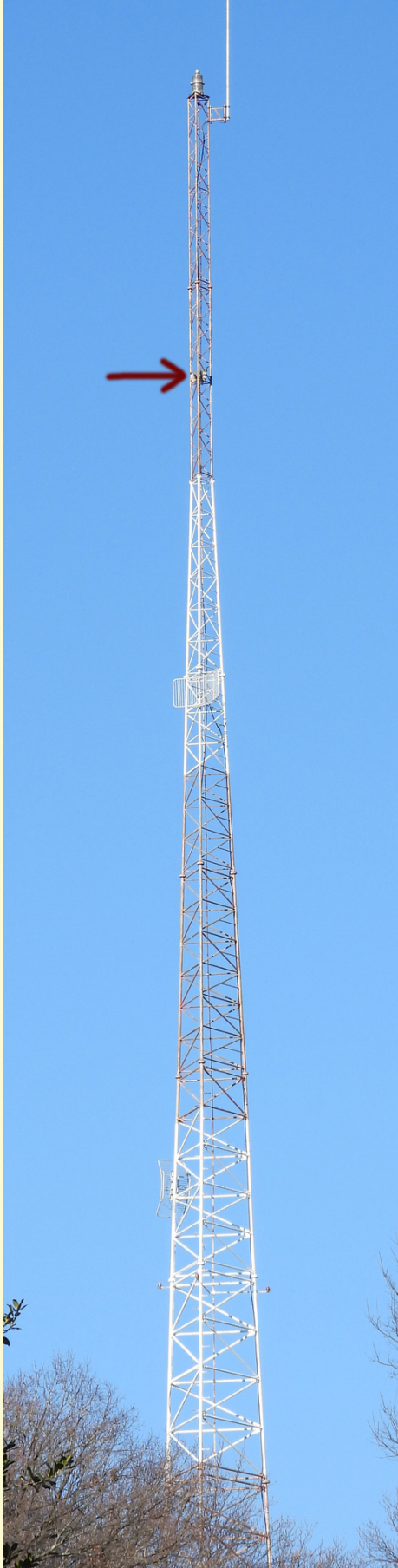
Recent Nature Sightings in Sligo



Female and male **Hooded Mergansers** at the Kemp Mill stormwater ponds on Jan. 28 (Dan Treadwell). These birds mate for life. Unlike many of our winter ducks, however, they don't travel long distances between their wintering grounds and breeding sites, the closest of which are along the Patuxent River.

Like Wood Ducks, they nest in tree cavities.





Top: **Eastern Red-tailed Hawks** on the radio tower at the Sligo Golf Course on Jan. 11.
Above: the height of their perch.
They also mate for life.
(D. Treadwell)



Top: A **Peregrine Falcon** on a radio tower at the WTOP site along Univ. Blvd.
Above: the height of its perch.
(D.Treadwell)



Above: One of many **Post Oak** leaves in a woodland behind stores along the north side of East West Hwy. east of Riggs Rd. on Dec. 28 (M. Wilpers)



Right: **Oyster Mushroom** in Carroll Knolls Park on Jan. 19 (Enoc Fuentes)

Gall of an **Oak Rough Bulletgall Wasp** in Forest Park on Jan. 6 (Adrienne van den Beemt). The wasp's fall and winter galls all contain female eggs. The gall can induce the oak to exude a sweet liquid that attracts hornets, yellowjackets, and carpenter ants who may protect the female wasp larva as it matures inside the gall.





Merlin at the Kemp Mill stormwater ponds (above) on Jan. 12 and at the Sligo Golf Course (right) on Jan. 25 (D. Treadwell)



Female **Wood Duck** at the Beltway ponds on Jan. 28 (D. Treadwell)



Two bird species that spend the winters in Sligo before heading back to their breeding areas in the spring. A **Dark-eyed Junco** (left) near Huntley and Dennis on Jan. 19 (Ron Wertz). They leave Sligo in early April and can nest as close as Garrett County. A **White-throated Sparrow** (right) between Hillwood Manor and the powerline on Jan. 15 (Kristin Zimmer). They leave Sligo in early May to nest in New England and Canada.



Pileated Woodpecker near Grandin and Gridley on Jan. 25 (camerashychris)



Above: **Mourning Dove** near Kansas and Cockerille on Jan. 19 (A. van den Beemt)



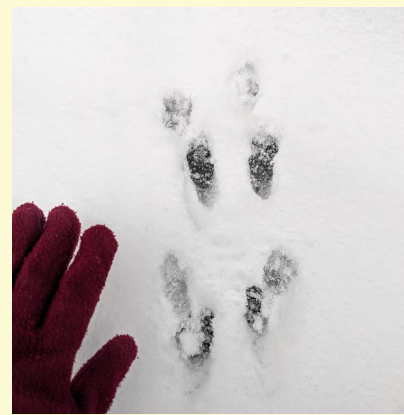
Right: **Cooper's Hawk** with prey (**Mourning Dove**) near Garland and Carroll on Jan. 17 (Jim Della).
Cooper's Hawks that nest the Mid Atlantic have been recorded in Florida during the winter.



Milk-white toothed Polypore fungi in Spring Park on Jan. 11 (A. van den Beemt)



A well-disguised **Eastern Cottontail** near Dogwood and Birch on Jan. 24 (taknaturalist)



Eastern Gray Squirrel tracks near 2nd and Allegheny on Jan. 14 (A. van den Beemt)



Above and right: **Basilica Orbweaver** (spider) egg cases suspended from the middle of a silk line near Allegheny and 2nd on Jan. 14 (A. van den Beemt). The Y shape of these silk strands is also the design used to start a full web with its many concentric circles.



Male and female **Wood Ducks** at the Beltway ponds on Jan. 7 (D. Treadwell)
Hollowed-out dead trees are their favorite locations for nesting.

Need to Reach Us?

President (Elaine Lamirande): president@fosc.org

Invasive Plants/RIP (Walter Mulbry): invasives@fosc.org

Litter/Sweep the Creek (Ed Murtagh): litter@fosc.org

Advocacy (Kit Gage): advocacy@fosc.org

Natural History (Michael Wilpers): naturalhistory@fosc.org

Stormwater (Elaine Lamirande): stormwater@fosc.org

Water Quality (Pat Ratkowski): waterquality@fosc.org

Outreach (Sergio Obadia): outreach@fosc.org

Treasurer (Tom Walton): treasurer@fosc.org

Webmaster (Christine Dunathan): webmaster@fosc.org

Newsletter Editors (C. Dunathan & M. Wilpers): editor@fosc.org



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.

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Friends of Sligo Creek | P.O. Box 11572, Takoma Park, MD 20913

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