

2024 in Review

Even though we had to spend a lot of time watering because of the second year in a row with drought, our volunteers accomplished many tasks this year. We began in January walking the park, cutting vines and assessing the area. We made a list of tasks for Chris Mourlas, the certified applicator who controls invasives. It is gratifying to see the results of our years of work; when we started in 2005, the woods was full of huge honeysuckle.

In February we devoted several sessions to clearing a badly overgrown area of the east end of the hill. Geoff used his chainsaw and Tyler plus worker bees made wildlife piles with the brush. Later Chris treated the vines. By the time you read this, we will have planted cherry and dogwood in the cleared area. In March Kay, Joe and I cut trees that had sprouted in the meadow and spot treated the stumps.

Spring means lots of tasks. We planted a large red buckeye – it blooms as the hummingbirds arrive. Jen Willoughby organized a City planting of 50 trees along the old sewer line. We assisted with fence cutting and water. We also planted 4 new trees along Carroll creek and potted 25 small bare-root gray dogwoods that we purchased for \$65. They developed really well, and in October we planted them in the park. Geoff did more chainsaw work. Barb obtained aged horse manure that we use where soil is poor. Rachel, Kathy, Sean and I prepped the birdhouses. Rachel and Kathy monitor them well into summer and fall.

Late spring & summer mean hand weeding, weed-whacking and monitoring the beds we have planted. We check and replace fences as needed. Thankfully we had no beaver damage this year. By late June our weekly

watering began. This continued with only a few exceptions into November. We applied 2 new coats of tung oil to the benches at the turtle area. Thanks to Tom with his rototiller, we enriched soil at the Key bench area with manure and replaced the hibiscus. Tim Kelly led the team that straightened the kiosk, rebuilt the door frame and installed new plexiglass.

A few years ago, the City installed \$20,000 in new trees with grant funds. The agreement was that we would maintain the trees. To that end, we hire MCLawnCare to weed and mulch. We also hired Bartlett Tree Experts to elevate trees for mower clearance.

As I write this mid-November, we are still awaiting the first hard freeze so we can patrol the woods removing small invasives. In early winter we will again cut trees from the meadow and hopefully hire a vendor to apply grass killer there in the spring. Since we did not mow the meadow last year, this will require a lot of hours. We will ask the City to resume a late spring meadow mowing.

Ginny Brace, *president*



Native wisteria was glorious



One of many chalk art projects



Tom tilling manure into hibiscus bed

Hail to the Worker Bees

This year we settled into a regular routine. Every Wednesday morning we meet and work for an hour and a half or so. What a great crew!

Thanks to Deb Portney, Barb Dunnington, KayDicharry, Susan and Brad Stokes, Robin Puritz, Joe Ganley, Tom Rogers and for specialized jobs Lesley Cristol, Geoff Mott, Tim Kelly, Kathy Soria, Rachel Zigler, the Vause girls and their friends.

Wednesdays at 5:30 Sean Bartlinski and I worked regularly for an hour and a half. We also thank the crew from Astrazeneca for continuing their annual afternoon of service. Thanks to Susan Stokes we have photos of many of our sessions.

Jerry Warner is not a regular worker bee, but he and Eric Kindahl bird in the park and let us know what species we need to be serving with plants and cover. Amazing that birders have spotted 127 species in Waterford Park!

Financial News

We remain in good shape thanks to member donations and the annual distribution from our fund at the Community Foundation. We thought we could end the ash tree treatments by now, but research says to keep them up every other year for a while. The CF distribution funds those treatments. Member donations fund the vendors we use and plants that we purchase. The ship continues to sail smoothly.



Red buckeye flower perfect for hummers

The really BIG news

After 19 years as president of FWP, I am ready to become more of a consultant, a hands-on consultant, but not the leader of every session and meeting. It is with great excitement that I tell you this group will transition to new leadership following our elections in the spring. You will get our spring mailing asking you to approve of Sean Bartlinski as president, Rachel Zigler, Kathy Soria and Pat Lloyd continuing in their offices, Dan Yates continuing as a director (and consultant for all tree concerns and questions) and Deb Portney and Barb Dunnington as co-chairs for park maintenance. FWP will be in good hands as you will see from the brief bios that I asked Sean, Deb and Barb to submit.

(See page 3 for Bios.)

www.FriendsOfWaterfordPark.org

Sean

Sean Bartlinski started visiting Waterford Park with his wife after moving nearby in 2018. Those visits became a near daily occurrence while working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Around this time, Sean completed the Maryland Master Naturalist training program and started volunteering as a worker bee in the park. He joined the Friends of Waterford Park board in 2023.

Sean appreciates the natural space that Waterford Park provides the community, and would love to see this unique place flourish for generations to come. An outdoor enthusiast all his life - hiking, camping, backpacking, kayaking - though perhaps moving through it a bit too fast at times. He is very grateful for the time spent volunteering in the park, for the many lessons it, Ginny, and the other volunteers have provided.

When not volunteering, or otherwise communing with nature, Sean leads a Business Operations and Enterprise Solutions team at NIH, having built a career managing teams, projects, and product development in the biomedical research industry.

Deb

Deb Portney is a resident of Frederick. She was employed as a Physical Therapist until she retired. She is a Maryland Master Naturalist and a Frederick County Master Gardener. She is the founder of the Wildlife Habitat Advisor Program for the Frederick area, a group that offers home and business owners the opportunity for a no-cost, on-site, in-person visit with trained Habitat Advisors working to transform private outdoor spaces into diverse native landscapes. She is a lifelong native plant enthusiast and lover of all things Nature.

Barb

After a career in project management, Barb began volunteering in the park. Her home in Waterford faces the creek. She has taken the Master Naturalist course to supplement the knowledge she has gained from many years of gardening. She enjoys working with the Wednesday crew and being involved with the Board.



Deb fencing dogwood



Barb and Robin planting dogwood



Spreading manure on hibiscus area



Worker Bees take a break to pose



Kay and Barb on the hill adding to the wildlife pile



Susan and Joe building a wildlife pile



Sean mulching Scout bed



Jerry's son Jack admiring the oak his dad donated



Tom and Barb oiling benches



Mulching the turtle area



Anne Kenny got a photo of one of the owls we hear.



You have to look closely to spot the wild ginger flower



Birds devour the early fruits on serviceberries

FWP Board of directors

Ginny Brace, *president*
Rachel Zigler, *vice-president*
Kathy Soria, *secretary*
Pat Lloyd, *treasurer*
Dan Yates, *director*
Barb Dunnington, *director*
Sean Bartlinski, *director*



Bartlett crew elevating trees

Purpose: *Friends of Waterford Park, a volunteer-staffed community service organization, is dedicated to the development of Waterford Park and Rock Creek Park as passive neighborhood parks by adding to and making improvements to the park landscaping and fostering neighborhood involvement in the development of the passive neighborhood parks.*
FWP is a 501(c)(3) MD Corporation. Guiding Principle: Do No Harm.