



LITTLE FALLS WATERSHED ALLIANCE

EDUCATION - ACTION - STEWARDSHIP

2018 Annual Report

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Little Falls Watershed Alliance

- ❑ Little Falls Watershed Alliance is an environmental stewardship group, founded in 2008 by a group of neighbors committed to protecting the fragile natural environment of the Little Falls and Willett Branches and surrounding Little Falls watershed. Our mission is to ensure that the natural spaces in our area persist for generations to come. We strive to bring neighbors together in order to build awareness, improve the natural habitat, protect our community's natural heritage, and enhance the community's enjoyment of our creeks and wooded areas.
- ❑ From our first meeting, we have grown to over 2,000 members and engaged more than 4,000 volunteers in over 600 work days and other activities. Our volunteers have logged over 8,700 hours of service to the watershed.
- ❑ As stewards, we are committed to restoring the water quality, natural habitat and ecological well-being of the Little Falls Watershed. We focus on trash abatement, habitat restoration, and stormwater management.
- ❑ As advocates, we speak up for the needs of our parks and natural areas, and we advocate for clean water laws that are fair and enforced consistently.
- ❑ As educators, we work with neighbors, school groups, local businesses and other community members to educate through classroom activities, festivals, community work days and outreach events.

Where Are We?



- 9.5 square miles in Lower Montgomery County and Upper NW DC
- Three Creeks –
 - Little Falls Branch
 - Willett Branch
 - Minnehaha Branch
- Three Main Parks:
 - Little Falls Stream Valley Park
 - Capital Crescent Trail
 - C&O Canal

Stewardship - Community Work Days

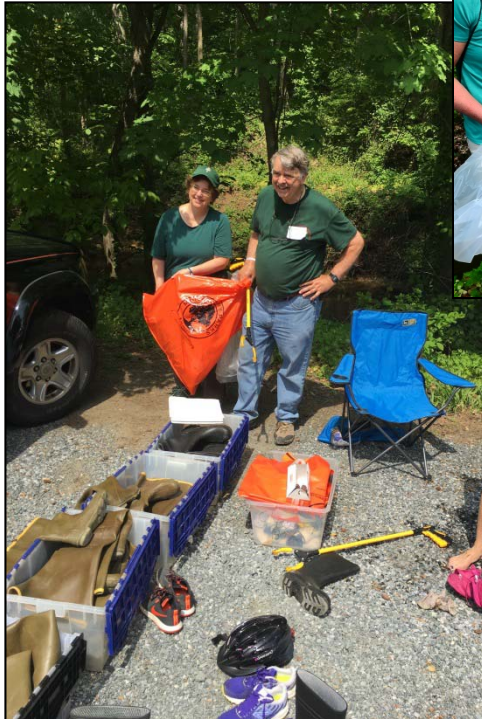
All Watershed Clean-ups

- Spring and Fall Events with three locations in the watershed
- Tenth year for the spring event, first year for fall
- 104 volunteers, 59 bags of trash and 22 bags recycling for total of 2,430 pounds of trash removed.
- Partner with Montgomery Parks, Alice Ferguson Foundation, and the Westmoreland Hills Garden Club.



Stewardship - Community Work Days

Trash Removal



- Partnership with Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County DOT. We provide volunteers with boots, gloves and bags.
- Every second Saturday, year round.
- 183 volunteers; 331 hours
- 2,520 pounds of trash
- 51 bags of recyclables

**Top Cleaning Group,
Three-Time Winner
Keep Montgomery County
Beautiful Program**

Stewardship - Community Work Days

Invasive Weed Removal

- ❑ 17 community work days in six locations in the Little Falls Stream Valley Park, Capital Crescent and Norwood Park
- ❑ Remove non-native invasive plants
- ❑ Partnership with Montgomery Parks
- ❑ 204 volunteers; over 446 hours



Stewardship – Trash/Invasive Removal Special Work Days

- ❑ Lead school, office, scout and civic groups for community service projects. Groups choose between trash pick-up or non-native invasive removal.
- ❑ Worked with 13 companies for a total of 743 man-hours.
- ❑ Provide supervisor, tools and gloves.



Stewardship - Habitat Restoration

Norwood Meadow

- ❑ Installed in 2011 in partnership with Montgomery Parks, funded in part by a grant from Whole Foods
- ❑ First meadow installed in a County park outside of Brookside Gardens.
- ❑ Ten community planting days have installed over 3,000 native grasses and wildflowers.
- ❑ Reseeded with wildflower seeds gathered from Montgomery County plants.



Stewardship - Habitat Restoration

Westbrook ES Meadow

- ❑ Partnership with Montgomery Parks and Westbrook Elementary School (MCPS).
- ❑ Students from the elementary school grew trees and plants from seeds.
- ❑ Local neighbors maintain meadow.
- ❑ In eleventh year.



Stewardship - Habitat Restoration

Green Acres Meadow

- ❑ Neighborhood led; Partnership with Department of Transportation.
- ❑ Phase Two completed: Land cleared and 200 native wild flowers and grasses planted with help of community members and local Elementary School Environmental club.
- ❑ Phase Three completed: 15 trees and shrubs planted along the creek bank in partnership with DOT.



Stewardship

Creek Monitoring

- ❑ **Benthic Macro-Invertebrate Monitoring:**
 - Monitor Little Falls Branch four times a year
 - 13 person teamed trained to capture and identify macro-invertebrates living on the bottom of the creek.
 - Report data to ANS and to MDE
- ❑ **Salt Level Monitoring:**
 - Test salt level in four locations as part of national study on impact of road salt on waterways.
 - Data is reported to Isaac Walton League

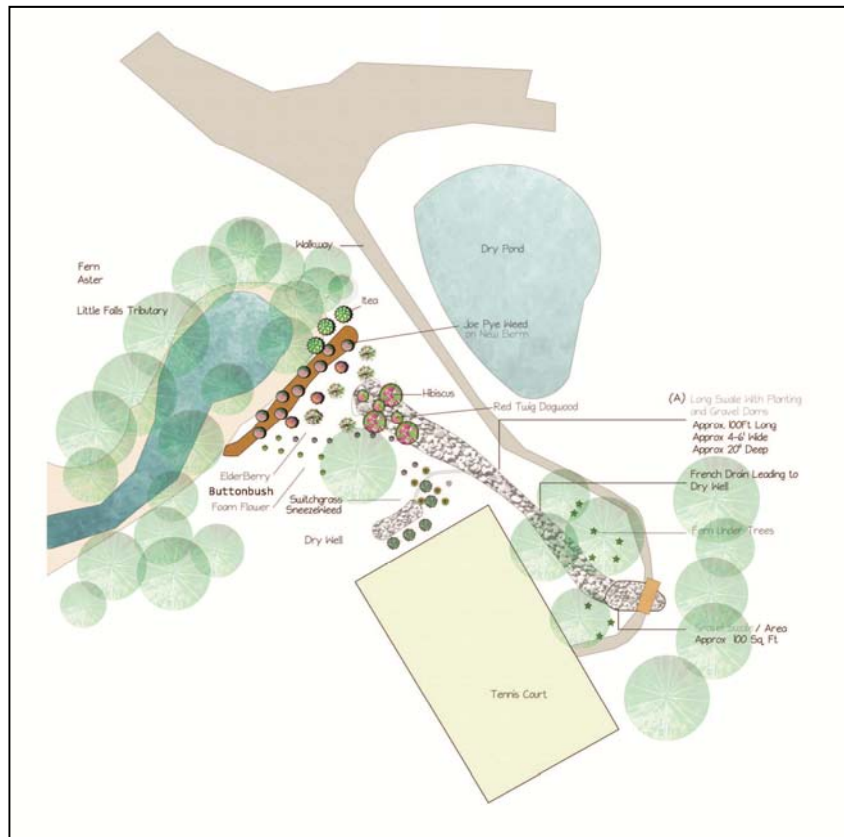


www.iwla.org

Stewardship - Stormwater Management

Sumner Village Grant

Stormwater Management Project



- Worked with Sumner Village Homeowners Association to develop a stormwater management plan to address severe erosion and flooding caused by run-off from uphill properties.
- Awarded a \$20,000 grant to install project. Funding for the grant is from the Montgomery County Water Quality Fund.
- Project includes dry creek, dry well and native planting.
- Project will be completed in spring of 2020.



Education and Outreach

Little Falls Festival

- Family oriented festival at the Little Falls Library to celebrate the watershed and official ribbon cutting for the new rain garden. 10 activity and information booths, music and food.
- Partnership with Little Falls Library, RainScapes, Montgomery County DEP, Audubon Naturalist Society
- Door prizes donated by local businesses



Education and Outreach: Creek Critter Days

- ❑ Free family event to hunt for Macro-invertebrates.
- ❑ Educates on stream health and engages public in stream ecology and understanding the need for clean water.
- ❑ Spring and Fall events lead by our stream monitoring team were attended by over 60 children and adults
- ❑ Partnership with Audubon Naturalist Society



Education and Outreach

Tree Care Workshop

- ❑ Partnered with Conservation Montgomery to bring an arborist to the watershed to discuss tree care issues.
- ❑ Free event open to watershed residents
- ❑ Residents joined arborist for a show and tell walk around the Somerset neighborhood stopping to discuss how to care for the trees.



Home Tree Care 101



Education and Outreach

Sidwell Friends

- Educational program on issues effecting the watershed developed for the Sidwell Friends Elementary School Second Grade to complement their science curriculum.
- Led two programs – one in the spring and one in the fall. The programs include a classroom lesson on the importance of native plants followed by a work day to remove invasive plants in the Little Falls Park.



Education and Outreach

Social Media, Community Events

- ❑ Publish monthly e-newsletter with information on environmental issues, native plants and events of interest. Newsletter is sent to 2,200 people on our mailing list.
- ❑ Speak to local garden clubs on issues facing the watershed
- ❑ Tabling at neighborhood events
- ❑ Educational events for cub scouts
- ❑ Active Facebook page with pictures of events and exchange information on native plants, stormwater issues, events of interest.






LITTLE FALLS
WATERSHED
ALLIANCE
www.LFWA.org

June in the Watershed

CRITTER COUNT

Discover Who Lives in the Creek!
Saturday, June 4
1:00 to 3:00



Join us for a fun family activity identifying critters in the creek. We will have all the tools you need to capture and ID the macro-invertebrates that live in the water. Bring your smart phone as we will be using an app created by the Audubon Naturalist Society for this activity. We have smart phone covers so don't worry about it getting wet. And if you don't have a smart phone, we can pair you someone who does. We also have a few boots to lend!

FREE!
Little Falls Stream Valley Park
Little Falls Parkway and Massachusetts Ave, Bethesda

Pre-registration is required as space is limited.
Visit our website [HERE](#) to register.

Clean the Creek, Clean the Parkway

Saturday, June 11, 10:00 to 12:00

Join us to clean the parkway and the Little Falls Branch between River Road and Mass Avenue. Meet at the gravel parking lot at intersection of Mass Avenue and Little Falls Parkway.

We have gloves and boots to share. Pre-approved for MCPS SSL hours. Visit our [website](#) for more information.

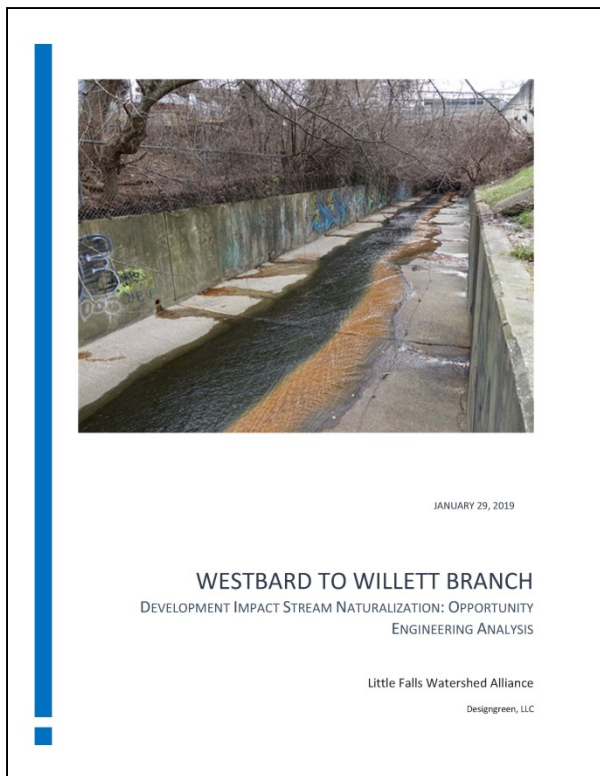
Alice Ferguson Watershed Clean-up Above and Below: It was snowing in April for the Alice Ferguson 28th Annual Potomac Watershed Clean-up, but that didn't stop our volunteers! Thank you to the dedicated crew that came out to clean the Willett and Little Falls Branches. And thank you to the crew that came out the next week (when the weather was much better) to finish the job. We removed 31 bags of trash, 13 of recycling with a total of 79 volunteer hours!

Visit our [Facebook](#) page for more pictures.

Advocacy

Local Development; Stormwater Permit

The health of the watershed is effected by development and permitting regulations at both the state and local levels. It is important to our mission that we work to ensure that regulations and decisions are made in such a way that the needs of the environment are met.



Development:

We are committed to closely monitoring development in the watershed and advocating for the strongest application of environmental standards. We review and comment on all stages of development and meet frequently with the developers and the planning staff.

- ❑ Regency Center Development at Westbard. Testified for maintaining a 100-foot buffer in all new building. Meet with Planning Staff, Permitting staff and developers to discuss improvements to the project. Worked with an environmental consultant to help prepare testimony and review documents.
- ❑ Hired an engineering firm to study the stormwater management plan for the development and recommend changes and improvements. Study showed that the developer was not meeting the obligation to do the most stormwater management possible for the lot. Meet with developer, planning staff and permitting staff to discuss modifications that could be made to the plan based on the study.

Advocacy

Willett Branch Stream Valley Park

Successfully advocated for a new park and naturalization of the Willett Branch for the Westbard area.

- ❑ Requested and participated in monthly stakeholder meetings to plan park and make sure it adhered to the strictest environmental standards.
- ❑ Had regular meetings with Montgomery Parks and Planning Staff to review progress on new park.
- ❑ Lead community walks down the Willett Branch to educate on the need for the new park.



Partners in Stewardship

Over 30 community partners support our efforts including:

George Washington Freshman Experience, Accenture, Wedding Wire, Spark Post, Abt Consulting, Mover Moms, Outdoor Illumination, Audubon Naturalist Society, Sidwell Friends Lower School, Cub Scout Pack 256, Montgomery Parks, UCG, DSG, Westland Middle School, the Democratic National Committee, Ledo's Pizza, Westmoreland Church, St. Dunstan's Church, Westmoreland Hills Garden Club, the Citizen's Coordinating Council of Friendship Heights, the Chevy Chase Garden Club, and Young Ambassadors for Community Service (YACS) Programme.



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- Mikel Moore, Vice President*
- Jonathan Breul, Treasurer*
- Sara Robinson, Secretary*
- Wendy Cohen
- George Wyeth

* Returning officers

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In Kind:

All Fired Up Pottery Painting, American Plant, River Road, Anglo Dutch Pools and Toys, Bethesda Bagels, House of Milae Korean Restaurant, Ledo's Pizza, Starbucks, Wild Bird Center, and Wow Cow