



LITTLE FALLS WATERSHED ALLIANCE

EDUCATION - ACTION - STEWARDSHIP

2020 Annual Report

2020: A Year Like None Other

2020 started out a high note. We hosted our first ever First Day Hike and 80 joined us for a 5-mile round trip hike to the mouth of the Little Falls Branch on the Potomac River. We partnered with a group in Palisades to start a new habitat restoration project and March looked promising with a well attended trash pick-up and more weed removal days.

Everything came to a halt that month because of the Pandemic. Community work days were cancelled and meetings and outdoor gatherings were prohibited. Our President, Jack Sobel, sent out a heartfelt message explaining why we were cancelling our events for the foreseeable future.

However, as the understanding of the virus progressed and the need for outdoor activities became paramount, our board rallied and with strict adherence to CDC guidelines, we resumed our trash pick-ups and habitat restoration work. We hosted 36 "individual trash pick-ups"; two eagle scout projects and several small group habitat restoration days. Over 500 volunteers joined us in these activities.

2020 was also an interesting year for advocacy and testimony. Shortly after our March testimony in Annapolis to support State monies for building the new Willett Branch Park, all in-person public meetings were cancelled. We learned to Zoom and how to have virtual meetings and our advocacy continued. We are proud to announce that Maryland did approve monies for the new Park. We have also continued our advocacy for strictest stormwater management for new development in Westbard and were pleased to learn that the new road planned for Westbard will have 100% stormwater management. The concrete storm drain on Little Falls Parkway was finally replaced with a vegetative swale, another win for the environment.

Other highlights of 2020 include welcoming three new board members, starting a bacterial monitoring program and our most successful fundraising year. Thank you to everyone for making this possible.



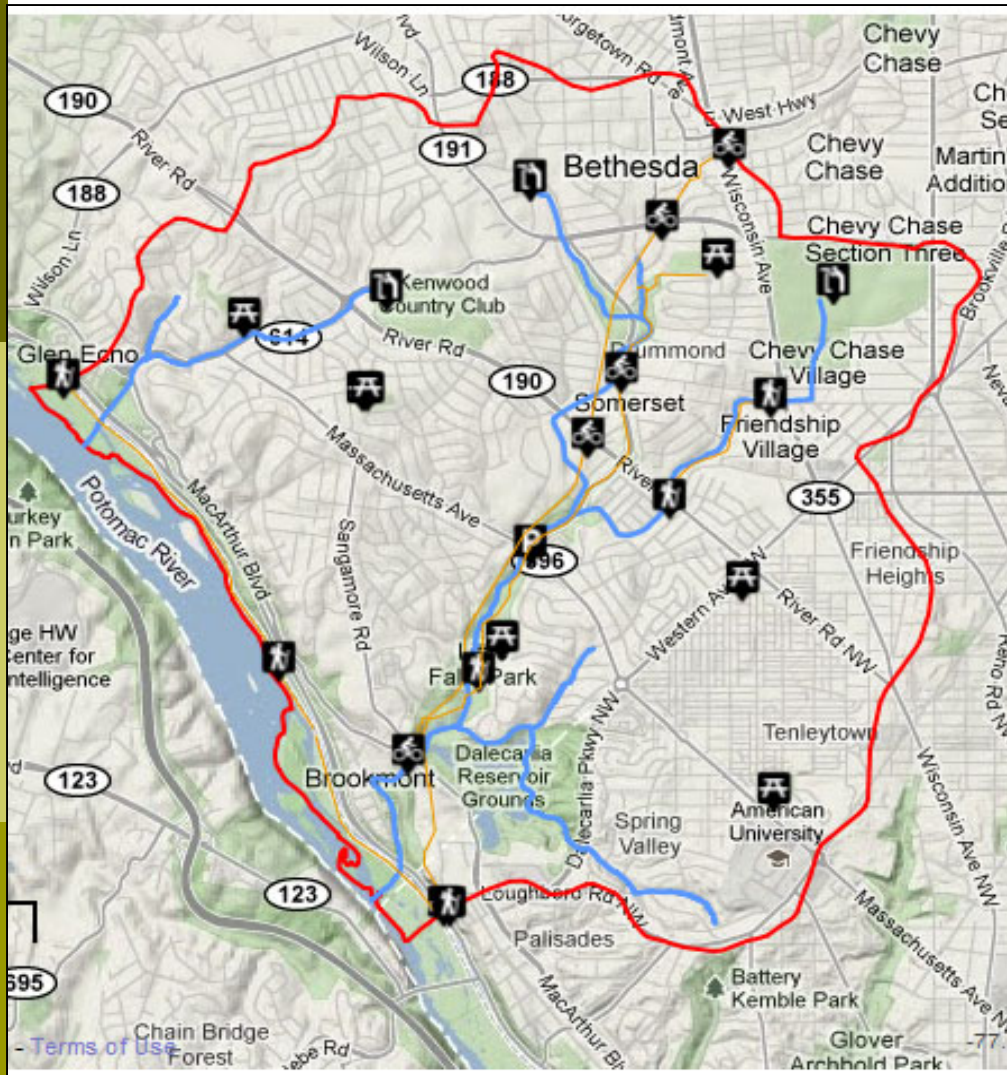
Sarah Morse, Executive Director
and the entire LFWA Board

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 2,800 members and engaged more than 6,500 volunteers in over 600 work days and other activities. Our volunteers have logged over 17,000 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

Trash Removal



- ❑ Partnership with Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County DOT. We provide volunteers with boots, gloves and bags.
- ❑ Hosted Individual Trash Pick-ups after the Pandemic cancelled group work days.
- ❑ Bags and gloves at two stations every Saturday starting in June.
- ❑ 522 volunteers; 980 man hours
- ❑ 7,020 pounds of trash; 42 bags of recyclables

Stewardship

Invasive Weed Removal

- ❑ Before Pandemic, hosted 4 community work days January through March - 64 participants, 128 man hours.
- ❑ After Pandemic, hosted two Eagle Projects and 6 small group work days June – December to remove invasives.
- ❑ Partnered with Montgomery County Public Schools to work in Forest Conservation areas and with Montgomery Parks.



Before (above)

After



Stewardship

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

Westbrook ES Meadow

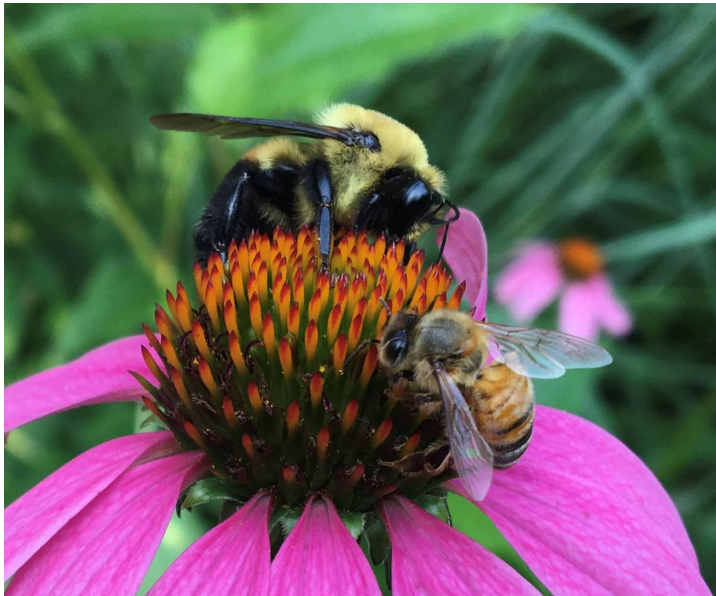
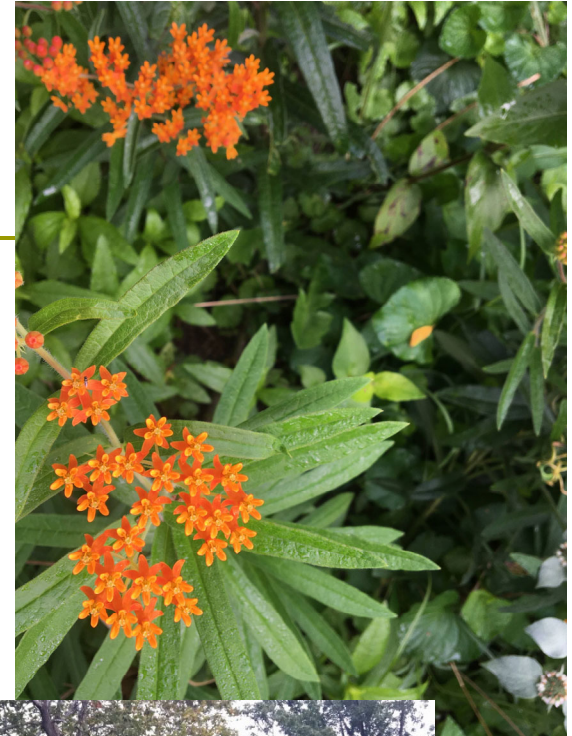
- ❑ Partnership with Montgomery Parks and Westbrook Elementary School (MCPS).
- ❑ Students from the elementary school grew trees and plants from seeds.
- ❑ Local neighbors maintain meadow.
- ❑ In twelfth year.



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 partner Audubon Naturalist Society
- ❑ **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



 **WINTER
SALT WATCH**
www.iwla.org

Stewardship

Creek Monitoring

■ Bacterial Monitoring

- Piloted a program in Fall to sample the Little Falls and Willett Branches to test for turbidity and bacterial count.
- Sampled 3 locations on the Little Falls Branch and 2 locations on the Willett Branch
- Hoping to determine fecal bacterial load and effect of WSSC sewer repair on the streams.



Sample ID	Date	Bacteria (MPN)	pH	Turbidity (NTU)	Air Temp (°C)	Water Temp (°C)
LF-2	9/9/2020	228.2	8	0.52	22	21
LF-3	9/9/2020	920.8	7	0.29	23	21
LF-4	9/9/2020	1203.3	7	0.57	23	21
LF-5	9/9/2020	517.2	7	0.36	23	21
LF-6	9/9/2020	365.4	7	0.25	22	21
LF-2	9/16/2020	131.4	7	0.18	16	17
LF-3	9/16/2020	920.8	6	0.42	16	17
LF-4	9/16/2020	260.3	6	0.18	17	17
LF-5	9/16/2020	325.5	7	0.53	16	15.5
LF-6	9/16/2020	613.1	7	0.44	15	16

Stewardship - Stormwater Management

Sumner Village Grant - Completed

Stormwater Management Project



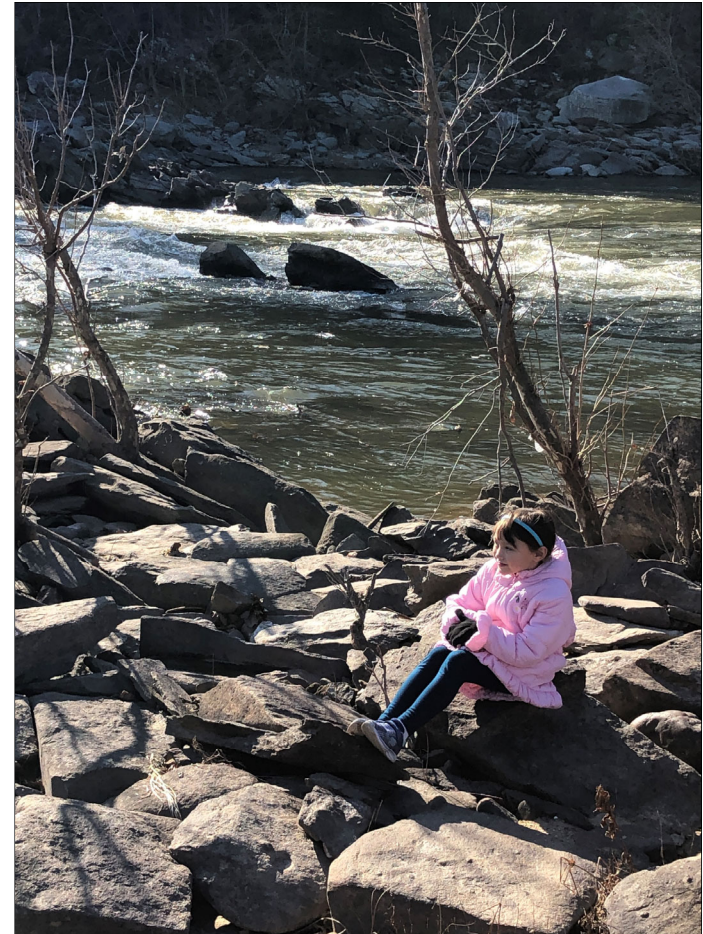
- Worked with Sumner Village Homeowners Association to install green stormwater management to address severe erosion and flooding caused by run-off from uphill properties.
- Awarded a \$20,000 grant in 2019 to install project. Funding for the grant is from the Montgomery County Water Quality Protection Fund.
- Project includes dry creek, dry well and native planting.
- Project was completed in Fall 2020 with a small show and tell event.



Education and Outreach

First Day Hike

- ❑ For 2020, we decided to join the First Day hike movement and host a 5-mile round trip hike from Little Falls Park Mass. Ave entrance to the mouth of the Little Falls Branch on the Potomac.
- ❑ Board Members led the hike and answered questions along the way.
- ❑ Great success - 80 people participated.



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 2,800 people on our mailing list.
- ❑ Speak to local garden clubs on issues facing the watershed
- ❑ Active Facebook page with pictures of events and exchange of information on native plants, stormwater issues, events of interest.



May in the Watershed

Dear Watershed Friends,

These last six weeks have been tough. We are all adjusting to a new normal and becoming familiar with the term "social distancing". We have had to cancel all our trash clean-ups, non-native invasive removal workdays and other volunteer events. However, one thing that we have discovered is how many people are turning to trails and parks to exercise and to enjoy the respite, comfort, and pleasures that nature has to offer us. Whether you are walking in the Little Falls Stream Valley Park, or biking along the Capital Crescent trail, it is clear that the watershed is an important part of your day.

With this in mind, we offer a few suggestions below on how you can experience the beauty of the Little Falls watershed while social distancing and help us continue our stewardship.

Please stay safe, healthy and be mindful of the guidelines for safe outdoor activities.

Sarah Morse
Sarah Morse
Executive Director

Find a Hidden Gem
The Little Falls watershed is full of special places - ponds, waterfalls, creeks and little groves. While many people enjoy a walk along the Capital Crescent or the Little Falls hiker/biker trail, we challenge you to find a hidden gem, a special place off the beaten track.

Send us a photo of your discovery for us to post on our Facebook page, and we'll enter you into a raffle for a LFWA T-shirt. Send photos to info@LFWA.org.

Click [HERE](#) to see hidden gems our board members have discovered. Click [HERE](#) for some suggestions of places to hike in the watershed.

Have a Family Hunt for Macro-Invertebrates!

The macro-invertebrates living in the creek tell you a lot about the water quality. We use the Creek Critter App at our family workshops and you can download it for an individual workshop. All you need is a net, a bucket, and a simple hand lens, and you can hunt for macro-invertebrates on your own or with your family. Visit [HERE](#) for instructions

Thank you to everyone who is making a difference in this time of social distancing. Our volunteer days may be cancelled, but that doesn't mean that our volunteers are not out there working on their own. Montgomery County Weed Warriors have been especially busy. Six full bags of garlic mustard were piled by the trash can at Mass and Little Falls Parkway. The Kathan family reports that they pulled 12 bags of garlic mustard in April. And the Martin family has been working on removing non-native

Advocacy

Willett Branch; Stormwater Management

Willett Branch Greenway

Since 2015, LFWA has been advocating for the formation of the Willett Branch Greenway, a new park and naturalized stream to replace the graffiti covered concrete culvert that is the current Willett Branch. The focus of much of our advocacy has been to ensure that development in the area of the new park conforms to the strictest stormwater management regulations. 2020 was an important year as the first parcel along the new greenway was approved as well as the new road for the development. Our work included submitting comments and testifying for strong stormwater management for the new building and road. We are proud to report that building will have 100% green stormwater management and the new road will be treated with a combination of green and structural methods, but with no need for a waiver.

Stormwater Partners

LFWA is a member of Stormwater Partners, an advocacy group for stormwater management regulations in Montgomery County. As a member of the group, LFWA has been involved in writing comments on the new stormwater (MS4) permit for both Maryland and for Montgomery County, advocating for implementation of a “no waiver” policy for stormwater management permits for new construction.

LFWA is also a member of the **Chose Clean Water Coalition**, **Montgomery Conservancy**, and **Trash-Free Maryland** and participates in their advocacy campaigns.

Partners in Stewardship

Over 30 community partners support our efforts including:

MOMs Organic Market, George Washington Freshman Experience, Accenture, Wedding Wire, Spark Post, Abt Consulting, Kind Deeds, Outdoor Illumination, Audubon Naturalist Society, Sidwell Friends Lower School, Cub Scout Pack 256, Cub Scout Pack 100, Montgomery Parks, UCG, DSG, Westland Middle School, the Democratic National Committee, Ledo's Pizza, Strosnider's Hardware, Westmoreland Church, St. Dunstan's Church, Westmoreland Hills Garden Club, the Citizen's Coordinating Council of Friendship Heights, the Chevy Chase Garden Club, Young Ambassadors for Community Service Programme (YACS), Montgomery County Public Schools, The Potomac School, and the Washington Waldorf School.



2020 Funders

Mark Abramson, Michael Adams, Sara Anderson, ATC Foundation, Yesenia Ayala, Matthew Babcock, Lynn Balzer-Martin, Joan Barron, William Bateson, David Batson, Alan Bender, James Berry, Susan Besharov, Emily Best, Randy Best, Carole Bewley, Marna Blanchette, Julia Blatt, Brian Borders, Peter Brandriss, David Brooks, Scott Brown, Arlene Bruhn, Ellen Buchanan, Joe & Betsy Bush, Barbara Butera, Bruce Butterworth, Daniel Butts, Angela Campbell, Cindy Chambers, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Dakade Charitable Fund, Dale Clayton-Morrison, Peggy Cloherty, Sarah Courtney, Colette Cowey, Mary Crimi, Laura Cutler, Robert Darius, Kirstin Darling, Suzanne Dater, Neal Davies, Jane Dealy, Janet Dence, Reid Detchon, Lynda DeWitt, Alan Dock, Jenny. Sue Dunner, Joan Ebzery, Elizabeth Edmonds, Sonni Efron, Deborah Eichhorn, Victoria Elliott, Marc Elrich, Yukinori Endo, Diane Epperson, Marco Espinosa, Michael Evenson, Meghan Fellows, Mark Fernandez, Laurie Fink, Mathew Fink, Matt Fink, Johanna Forman, Irene Boardman Foundation, Lois Frankel, Lucy Freeman, Ali Freischlag, Brian Frosh, Cinzia Furlanetto, Pamela Gallagher, James Gallagher, Kelly Gardner, Sandra Geddes, James Gerard, Seth Goldman, Deborah Goldstein, Spencer Gordon, Jr., Cynthia Green, Liza Greenberg, Jon Grossman, Bill Gruen, Philip Gunn, Reza Haghighi, Julie Hamre, Jim Harkins, Lindsay Harris, Bridget Hartman, Eileen Hartzell, Marea Hatzios Grant, Chris Homan, Rob Hotakainen, MIke Hunninghake, Neil Hurwitz, Orion Hyson, Annie Ianniello, Dan Ianniello, Robert Ives, Monica Jaehnig, Peter Janssens, Beth Jones, Maurie Kathan, David Kathan, Toby Kathan, Pamela Postma Khinda, Laurence Kirsch, Joan Kloepfer, Adam Kolton, Bridget Kord, Marc Korman, Jeanette Kreiser, Gary Ladner, Ellen Laipson, Susan Lanham, Jeff Lape, Sara Sherburne Laughlin, Kathleen Leis, Karen Lerohi Wilson, Noam Levey, Judy Lieberman, Frank Linton, Ruth Lis, Katherine Lucas, Nicole Lurie, Randy Lyon, Kristi Maasjo, Virginia Mahoney, Jen Mallon, Lisa Marcus, Lucky & Bill Marmon, Dana Martin, Scout Master, Mary Masulla, Joe Matal, Kathy Matthews, Elliot Maxwell, Alice Mayo, Sarah McCullough, John McGrane, Milly McLean, Mary Ann McNamar, Lynden Melmed, Sharon Metcalf, Dan Mick, Robyn Miller-Tarnoff, Daniel Mirkovic, Mikel Moore, Sarah Morse, Gale Morse, Corrie Morsey, John Mulligan, Francesca Muratori, Adrienne Nassau, Katherine Nelson, Jim Nelson, Abby Nolan, Viveca Novak, Mark Pearce, Leilani Pearson, Margaret Pfohl, Cathy Pickar, Nancy Pindus, Joanna Pistenmaa, Richard Podolske, Eleanor Pomeroy, Anne Proctor, Julie Raffensperger, Meigs Ranney, Amy Reichert, Suzanne Richman, Mike Riley, Amy Rispin, Rebecca Robinson, Sara Robinson, Michelle Roos, Amy Ross, Nancie Rubin, James Russel, Frank Sanford, Geraldine Schneeberg, Cynthia Schollard, Steven Schooner, Deborah Schumann, Janell Schweickert, Joshua Seidman, Peter Selfridge, Nancy Sharko, Marnie Shaul, Carolyn Sherman, Arthur Shingleton, David Shumaker, Kathy Sierra, Steve Silverman, Jeffrey Slavin, Jack Sobel, Howard Solomon, Jeri Somers, Frances Spaeder, Mary Speck, Nessa Spitzer, Susan Spock, Woody Stanley, Tom Stanton, Susan Stein, Seth Stern, Kay Stevens, Chelle Stillman, Catherine Stine, Cathy Stocker, Sally Strain, Russell Sturm, Mary Sutherland, Greta Swanson, Kari Swenson, Ann Swett, Alexandra Szostak, Carolyn Talcott, Helen Thompson Morrison, Karen Thornton, Sara Tucker, Sally Verser, Casey Volanth, Myriam Vuckovic, Albert Wavering, Kirby Weldon, Meredith Wellington, Ann Westerman, John Wheeler, Louise Winstead, Jim Wrathall, Amy Wrona, Virginia Wydler, George Wyeth, Nathan Wyeth, Anne Yap, Mark Zitter, Theresa Zmola, and Diana Zurer.

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- Mikel Moore, Vice President*
- Jonathan Breul, Treasurer*
- Sara Robinson, Secretary*
- Laurie Fink
- Randy Lyon
- Karen Thornton
- George Wyeth

* Returning officers

2020 Budget

Category	
Fundraising	\$804
Sumner Village	\$1,099
Management and Administration	\$6,615
Advocacy	\$1,925
Education & Outreach	\$3,245
Stewardship	\$6,343
Total	\$20,031