

- NEXT GENERAL MEETING 5/27/09**
- Deputy County Manager Donnellan on Economic Effects on Budget
 - Your Input & Concerns

Left: I spy volunteers at the invasive plant removal "party" at Lacey Woods Park. But do we see you?

May 2009 A Public Service of Your Bluemont Civic Association

www.bluemontcivic.org

Preserving Lacey Woods Park: An Urban Gem

With its playground, soccer field, basketball court, picnic pavilions and wide walkways under towering canopy trees, Lacey Woods Park is an ideal neighborhood park that provides something for everyone. Lacey Woods' incredible native plant diversity is representative of the original dogwood and maple forest that covered Arlington, with trees 75 to 100 years old.

There are glens filled with four varieties of ferns, Solomon's seal, sedge, sorrel, hearts a bursting and large serviceberry trees. The area near N. George Mason Drive was once the oldest and largest headland of a wetland area, with large red maples, turk's cap lily and fern glades poking out among the invasive English ivy. Closer to the Edison Street exit, the greenbrier vines and viburnum provide a safe habitat for animals and birds—a pair of red tail hawks were observed starting a family in one of the snags (dead trees left as animal habitat). The park has the highest density of salamanders of any park in Arlington! It is truly a gem providing much pleasure to our urban living, and now it is time for us to give back to the park.

Recent Volunteer Successes And New Challenges

Over the past four months, more than 130 volunteers have met every second Saturday from 10 am to noon to remove invasive plants and explore the beauty of the park. The group has removed all the English ivy from the trees and ground in the open area—thus increasing the odds of survival for the State Champion Eastern Hemlock and the National Champion Virginia Pine—and has rescued a large glade of ferns. We've also become aware of other problems, and we need to act now to prevent further deterioration of the park. ➔3

BCA MEETINGS AT A GLANCE

NEXT GENERAL MEETING WED. 5/27, 7:30 pm at ATS
Please help us welcome Deputy County Manager Barbara M. Donnellan on 5/27/09 at Arlington Traditional School (ATS is located at 855 N. Edison Street). With the difficult economic climate, citizens are now more interested than ever in the county's budget process. Donnellan will be on hand to explain the budget process and how the County Manager's office is working to keep Arlington's budget balanced.

LAST GENERAL MEETING 4/29 Green Home Building

The county's LEED AP Program Manager, Helen F. Reinecke-Wilt, described her background in urban planning with respect to both residential and commercial green building. She also described the Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program and the Arlington County Green Home Choice ➔2



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Return Your Wilson Boulevard Commercial Area Survey by June 1

In order to obtain residents' feedback on the Wilson Boulevard commercial area (between N. George Mason Drive and N. Greenbrier Street) and to determine whether Bluemonters would be in favor of a village center design to guide future redevelopment along the commercial area, BCA created and distributed a brief preliminary survey as part of the April newsletter. We urge all Bluemont residents to complete and return the survey by the deadline on June 1. Complete the survey online at www.bluemontcivic.org, or mail the paper version to BCA, P.O. Box 5134, Arlington VA 22205. ■

Nominate Yourself Or Someone Else

BCA is searching for new officers and representatives for its June election. If you are interested in serving or know someone else who may be interested in serving, please contact one of the Nominating Committee members ASAP: Richard Young at rcyoung22203@yahoo.com, Bob Atkins at luddite2003@yahoo.com or David Van Wagner at dpvanwagner@mindspring.com. ■

BCA MEETINGS AT A GLANCE

FROM P.1

Program. Details are available at <http://www.arlingtonva.us/Portals/Topics/TopicsEnvironment.aspx#green>.

Bluemont Park Update

Environmental Landscape Supervisor Patrick Wegeng, of the county's Parks and Natural Resources Division, was on hand to update members on the landscaping that will accompany the new split-rail fence along the trail in Bluemont Park. Note: BCA President Judah dal Cais explained that the split-rail fence—instead of the post-and-rail fence that BCA had voted for on February 25—was installed due to a miscommunication between BCA and the county.

Wegeng outlined the various goals of the landscaping plans. There is room to plant approximately 40 to 50 trees, which will provide shade, discourage weed growth and block illegal vehicular access to the park. The trees chosen will have a high canopy (no low-hanging, dense vegetation) and will be planted at least eight feet from the bike trail. The plantings will be placed in attractive groupings with a more natural look. The plan also calls for installing a long, narrow berm and adding boulders that would be partially buried to provide seating adjacent to open play areas. The goal is to create places where residents would want to linger and enjoy the space. Wegeng noted that his budget includes funds for maintenance/watering.

BCA members approved a motion to accept the landscaping concept plan, as presented, and to authorize the BCA Executive Board and any interested residents to approve the installation. Within the next two weeks, Wegeng will place different-colored flags to indicate locations of trees and boulders and will paint the ground outlining where the berms will be constructed. BCA will evaluate these layouts and promptly forward comments to Wegeng. With a planting deadline of May 29, there is not adequate time to defer these decisions until the next general meeting on May 27. ➡4

When — and Where — Do We MEET?

Glad you asked! General membership meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of each month (September through June) at 7:30 pm. Executive Board meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm (all BCA members are welcome). Meetings take place at Arlington Traditional School (ATS) unless announced otherwise. Visit www.bluemontcivic.org for current information. ■



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► Lacey Woods Park FROM P.1

Since the unsightly wire fencing was removed from the middle of the park, walkers and dogs have created informal trails, which has compacted soil around the trees and disturbed several plant colonies—problems exacerbated by droughts in past years. To prevent further erosion and the death of more trees, these areas must be rehabilitated and disturbances minimized. In other parks, this goal has been accomplished by outlining the walking trails with fallen logs and limbs, a natural resource that both looks appropriate and is freely available. Several of the meandering walks should be closed, but others will be left open for visitors to enjoy the beauty.

Around the park entrances, unwanted shrubs, leaves, and lawn clippings have been dumped with the mistaken belief they will decompose and be part of nature. In fact, native flowers have been killed and trees endangered by this dumping, and more invasives have spread in the park. To save the trees, the huge pile of leaves, grass, and clippings must be pulled out and removed, which is why dumping in public parks is illegal and subject to fines.

More Volunteers Are Needed

Won't you join us and help give back to our park? BCA is planning other ways to protect our park, but we invite you to become a Second Saturday volunteer (June 13 and July 11 are the next dates) at 10 am. Meet at the park's entrance on 11th Rd. North where it dead-ends on N. Frederick St. BCA and Urban Forestry Commission member Nora Palmatier leads these work parties, and she will happily give you a tour of Lacey Woods' natural beauty when the work ends at noon. You can reach her at 703-527-2349 or norapalm@verizon.net. There's no need to pre-register, just come join us. ■

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Did We Deliver?

An army of volunteers delivered BCA's April newsletter by hand to all (approximately 2,000) households and businesses in the neighborhood. We appreciate the efforts of our delivery volunteers and our newsletter distribution coordinator, Judy Collins. If you did not receive a copy, please contact Judy at jc.swings@verizon.net or 703-276-0124. ■



Another volunteer army is working hard to revive our Lacey Woods Park and could use your help.

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2010 County Budget Adopted

According to the county's Website, the County Board adopted the fiscal year (FY) 2010 Budget on 4/28/09. The 2010 budget is \$946.8 million, up 0.6% from the FY 2009 Revised Budget. Total spending is up 0.5%, excluding schools. The transfer of \$352.4 million to county schools was up \$2.3 million over 2009, an increase of 0.65%.

To balance the budget, there were \$19.8 million in service cuts. The Parks Department's budget lost funds for tree planting and maintenance among other items. In addition to reductions in funding for adult day care program, child care subsidies and youth mental health services, there also were cuts to the police and library budgets. The Board did, however, add more than \$1 million to increase funding for critical safety net programs that provide shelter and transitional housing, food and emergency assistance to help residents most affected by the recession.

Find details at www.arlingtonva.us. ■

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Next BCA Meeting ATS 5/27

Ballston Farmers' Market 5/29
11am-3pm, Welburn Square
(9th & Stuart Streets)

Composting Essentials 5/30

Workshop, 11am-1pm,
Potomac Overlook Regional Park

JUNE

Exec. Board Meeting 6/9

Ballston Arts & Crafts 6/13
Market, 10am-4 pm, Welburn Sq.

Second Saturday 6/13

Invasive Plant Removal, 10am-noon,
Lacey Woods Park

BCA General Meeting 6/24

BCA Neighborhood News

is a service of YOUR community civic association.

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MEETINGS AT A GLANCE

FROM P.2

Penske Rental Truck Parking

Robbie Guenther, who owns the Texaco/D&V Auto Service Center on Wilson Boulevard, used to park his Budget (now Penske) rental trucks in the Safeway parking lot. After questions about Safeway's permit for the trucks arose, and Guenther could no longer use the lot, the idle trucks were parked on near-neighborhood streets.

In response to neighbors

unhappy with having the trucks parked on the street, BCA wrote to Safeway requesting that it again allow Guenther to use its lot. Guenther has proposed a maximum of 10 to 15 trucks to be parked at the N. Edison Street end of the lot, and Safeway has promised to reply within three months.

Given the problems associated with the trucks when they were first parked in the Safeway lot (an accumulation of trash and unwanted activity around the trucks), some members

expressed concern and insisted that these problems be addressed. Guenther explained that his business and his home are located in the Bluemont neighborhood, and therefore he is eager to respond to neighbors concerns and avoid potential problems related to the trucks. He has requested repeatedly that neighbors approach him directly at his business or home with issues related to his rental trucks, and he has outlined detailed procedures to help avoid a repeat of past problems. ■