

July 28, 2014

Mr. Mayor and members of the City Council,

I am Elvia Thompson, co-founder of Annapolis Green. My address is PO Box 3423, Annapolis, Maryland 21403.

I want to take a few minutes this evening to tell you about what happened at the Ellen O. Moyer Back Creek Nature Park this past Saturday.

Annapolis Green, sponsored by Keep America Beautiful and Bud Light, led a clean-up and refresh of the park. The project, one of 60 around the country, was named by Bud Light, "Do Good. Have Fun." And we did both.

Some 70 volunteers showed up in the morning and we assigned them jobs that had been coordinated with the city's Recreation and Parks department. We planted dozens of plants, we scrubbed the features in the park including signs and wooden steps and picnic tables. We picked up litter. We hammered down protruding nails. We cut back overgrown invasive species. We screwed down dangerously loose planks on the pier. And we spread pile after pile of woodchips along the trails.

You've heard of "it takes a village," well, we had that village. People as far away at Waldorf came to volunteer and as close as just a few blocks away.

In addition to the main sponsorship from Bud Light, local organizations stepped up to help make it a success, largely at their own expense. Chesapeake Bay Roasting Company provided morning coffee. WRNR radio provided great music to help pump everybody up through the early morning rain. MOM's Organic Market in Bowie provided snacks. Garden Girls provided landscaping advice and purchased the plants for us at a discount. The Spa Creek Conservancy provided tools like shovels and rakes. Annapolis Community Boating provided kayaks for litter patrol from the water side and loads of support. Port Annapolis Marina provided its beautiful and very valuable pavilion space for our after-party. And the Chesapeake Bayhawks were well represented, volunteering, giving back to the community also.

The generally agreed upon value of a volunteer hour in Maryland is about \$25.50. That is the figure used by many philanthropic organizations. Using that number, times three hours, times 70 volunteers, the total value of the volunteer labor donated to the city was \$5355. Add to that about \$1000 worth of plants.

What's important here is that the Back Creek Nature Park is a little jewel. A place where people go to relax and get close to nature, to walk their dogs, and to get access to the

water and to learn about the ecology of the area. Our goal is to organize a Back Creek Conservancy modeled after the very successful Spa Creek Conservancy that has done a remarkable job with stormwater management projects in the Spa Creek watershed including the parking lot at Blackwall Hitch and the rain gardens at several car dealerships along West Street. There is plenty to be done in the Back Creek watershed too. Saving the Bay begins with doing right by the creeks and rivers.

To end this little presentation I would like to say that I was hoping that some of you would come to the park on Saturday while we were working so you could see the whole operation in action. Alderman Kirby did come later in the afternoon and he said he was impressed. I am going to email all of you a link to some photos of our event. That link is already on our website, AnnapolisGreen.com.

Former Mayor Moyer was with us as well, sharing her vision for the park and providing encouragement.

Finally, I want to commend the employees of the Recreation and Parks Department. We planned with Marisa Wittlinger and Andy Costello and the day of the event two parks maintenance men were on hand, theoretically to take care of any problems or answer questions. But they worked along side the volunteers and they worked hard. I'm sorry that I don't know the last names, but the first names are Travin and Vernon. And their supervisor, Rodney Dillard, came in **on his day off** just to see how things were going.

I hope that you will visit the park in the very near future. It truly is a gem and we are very proud of the work we did to assist the hard working employees in keeping it a beautiful place for all of us to enjoy. Annapolis Green's new motto is Keeping Annapolis Green Clean and Beautiful. Places that are cared for attract people who care and we're glad to do our bit.

Thank you.