



The Sense of Wonder

The Rachel Carson Meadow in North Four Corners Park

Rachel Carson - scientist, writer, and advocate for nature (1907-1964) is most well-known for her book, *Silent Spring*, which brought to light the ecological and health dangers of indiscriminate use of chemical pesticides. However, her last book entitled *The Sense of Wonder* was a plea for adults to cherish and encourage children's love and understanding of the natural environment.

The Rachel Carson Meadow is six acres that were acquired in 1997 by Montgomery County to expand the existing eight acre, North Four Corners Local Park. The Meadow has a change in elevation of 35 feet diagonally across. School facilities had previously occupied some of the land, but it was primarily open green space and includes an 180 year old black walnut tree along with other native trees and plants.

It is frequently used by neighborhood families for unstructured recreation, by dog owners to exercise their pets, and by other down-county residents, who enjoy its natural setting. These diverse uses are possible because the Meadow has, according to landscape architects, "rooms" which allow different activities to occur without infringing on other park users.

In 2008, the Montgomery County Parks Department decided that an adult-size soccer field with a 50 space parking lot should be built at a cost of over \$5 million. As part of this project, the existing soccer field on the other side of the park would be removed. County Executive Ike

Leggett did not recommend funding this project, but the County Council voted to spend the money anyway. It is estimated that the same amount of funds could renovate 11 existing athletic fields. Most of the mature tree cover will be removed and 26 feet of fill dirt will be required to create a sufficiently large flat space for the field and parking lot.

The community residents have been united in their belief that the Meadow should be retained as a natural green space and would be a much more cost-effective use of County operating and capital funds. Rachel Carson's words have inspired our residents to persevere and they have dedicated this space to her memory.

Please join us in our efforts to keep the Meadow as a place where children can discover and grow their "sense of wonder" in nature's beauty as Rachel Carson wished.

The Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association represents about 1,500 households in the Silver Spring area of Montgomery County and has met regularly since the early 1970's. The Association's boundaries are Colesville Road, University Boulevard, Caddington Avenue/Loxford Terrace, and the Northwest Branch.

The Northwood-Four Corners area is a walkable and very liveable community with a population that is racially and ethnically diverse, has a wide range of incomes and ages, and includes many long-term residents.

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