



Encampment Near the Railroad Tracks

Several garden members raised concerns about the recent appearance of two homesteaders in tents near the WMATA railroad tracks. The board provided updates for actions taken to date, including contacting the National Park Service, determining the property owner (which is NOT NPS), and contacting Miriam's Kitchen for outreach. A note from Jamie Euken, our National Park Service point of contact:

To the BRCGA community:

"When Nicole informed me of the encampment near the railroad tracks just north of Blair Road Community Garden, we determined that it is not on NPS land, and we worked to determine who the appropriate authority is to address this issue. We are working with US Park Police to coordinate with the appropriate landowner, who we have identified as CSX. I will continue to provide Nicole with progress updates as they are available.

As we work to get this resolved, please practice appropriate safety while in the garden. Be aware of your surroundings. Avoid being in the garden alone if possible, or make sure others know when you'll be in the garden. If you see something suspicious or illegal, you can dial either 911 or the US Park Police at 202-610-7500. Do not attempt to inspect the encampment or engage with anyone associated with it, we will have the appropriate authorities speak to any individuals present and direct them to the proper resources."

Thank you
Jamie Euken
National Park Service

The board will continue to provide updates to the community as we receive them. Please reach out to your section captain or the board if you have any follow up questions.

Meeting Updates

Membership

We have over 150 returning gardeners who have paid for their plot and signed their permit. We will welcome at least 25 new gardeners this year and you'll start to see them in the coming weeks as we contact folks from the waitlist (we currently have over 50 applicants). If you see a new gardener - introduce yourself so they get to know our community. We also have a few gardeners who still need to sign their permit and/or fix a fencing issue. If you have a yellow sign on your plot, please reach out to your section captain - we need your help to complete the renewal process.

Financials

As of March 31, 2023, the association had \$6,234 in our account. This includes \$4,645 from renewal fees and \$1,163 in donations. Key expenses since the fall meeting include new tools and repair; printing and mailing materials; and administrative renewals like our PO Box.

Non-Profit Status Update

Exciting news! After many years, the board has finally established the Blair Road Community Garden Association as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. With this new designation, we can apply for grant funding to make improvements to the garden and donations may qualify for tax deductions.

At the meeting, attendees voted for their project suggestions, including diverting water out of the garden, transitioning to battery-operated tools w/a solar charging station, establishing raised beds in the Heritage Garden, and removing invasive species. The board is looking for volunteers who can help with grant writing - please reach out if you're interested!

Officers

Attendees unanimously elected Dalila Brooks (C70) as our new secretary. The board will miss our previous secretary, Christina Armas-Edwards, but we look forward to her supporting the community in other ways this season.



Looking ahead

Saturday, April 29 – visit the BRCGA booth at this week’s Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B’s Earth Day Resource Fair from 11 am – 2 pm at Whittier Elementary School and visit the BRCGA booth! To learn more and RSVP, go here:
<https://rebrand.ly/ANC4BEarthDayFair>

Earth Day Resource Fair
APRIL 29, 2023 | 11AM-2PM
WHITTIER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Join government agencies, nonprofits, neighborhood groups, and more with the goal of sharing resources and opportunities for engagement around environmentalism!

Event Cosponsors:
 JANESE
 CHRISTINA HENDERSON
 AT-LARGE DC COUNCILMEMBER

Food Vendors:

Engage with amazing organizations!
 Anacostia Watershed Society
 ANC 3C Environmental Justice Committee
 Capital Bikeshare
 DC Department of Aging and Community Living
 DC Public Library
 DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency
 DC Water Drain the Rain Downspout Disconnection Program
 DDOT Trails Program & Urban Forestry Division
 DOEE Reuse DC Program
 DPW Office of Waste Diversion
 DPW Solid Waste Education and Enforcement Program
 FRESH FARM FoodPrints
 goDCgo Sustainable Commuting
 Green Neighbors DC
 Mayor's Office of the Clean City
 Rock Creek Conservancy
 Sierra Club DC
 Washington Area Bicyclist Association
 Ward 8 Woods

Free Cherry Blossom Themed Raffle!

Fun activities for kids!

No ticket required. RSVP appreciated!

See the full list on the event page:
<https://rebrand.ly/ANC4BEarthDayFair>

Saturday May

13 Seed Swap, 10AM

For information on the latest events and garden updates, visit the bulletin board or the BRCGA website (www.blairroadcga.org)

Updates

Maintenance Committee Update

Greg King, maintenance committee lead, announced the appointment of two additional co-leads Stephanie Fosberg and Carmelita Maness. Heather Hunter-Nickels, BRCGA VP serves as board liaison. The committee’s main goal is to get input from members while working efficiently and collaboratively to improve and maintain the garden. During the winter the committee hosted 2 power tool trainings and nearly a dozen members helped turn the water on earlier this month.

If interested in joining the committee, reach out to Greg or the board. We also have several other committees looking for volunteers. Visit our website or the bulletin board for the full list!

Food Security Plot D39/D40

Following the departure of the previous plot manager, Judy Rosenthal, the board put out a call for a new volunteer to coordinate the food security plot. Danielle Smith will support the plot this year, with help from a few volunteers who reached out via email. If you would like to get involved, please let us know!