



ROLAND PARK NEWS

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Out in the Open

Residents of Greater Roland Park Launch \$10M Campaign to Preserve Open Space

By Henry Mortimer

Everybody's doing it. Well, not exactly everybody, but people from cities across the U.S.—from Cincinnati to Seattle, Philadelphia to Portland, and Minneapolis to metropolitan Washington, D.C.—are getting involved with it. And now a number of major neighborhoods

in north Baltimore want to attempt it, too.

What is "it"? Creating more green and open



The Open Space Campaign seeks to preserve and enhance a 17-acre swathe of land, providing, among other amenities, a recreational space that will positively impact all of Greater Roland Park. Photo: Anne Suzin



The Greater Roland Park Master Plan lays out a vision for a community park on land the Baltimore Country Club deems surplus. Image courtesy of the Greater Roland Park Master Plan Committee

spaces in their urban communities.

It sounds like a simple concept and it is. But there can be some complex consequences and costs involved. For one thing, setting aside often very valuable land in an urban area for non-developmental purposes can be politically tricky and extremely expensive. According to the Maryland Department of Planning, the estimated average market value of land and buildings in Baltimore City in 2007 was more than \$13,000 per acre—\$4,000 per acre more than in neighboring Baltimore County.

However, the number of benefits to creating or, as in the case of the efforts of residents in and around Baltimore's Roland Park neighborhood, preserving existing open spaces may outweigh the costs.

According to Anirban Basu, Chairman

Falling for Robert E Lee Park

By Nancy Worden Horst

Many paths lead to Robert E Lee Park—a boardwalk from the MTA light rail parking lot, the main entrance from Lake Drive, the Woodbrook trail and trails near Towson Run and L'Hirondelle Club Road.

But the newly reopened trail leading from Falls Road just south of Brooklandville Fire Station to the refurbished trestle bridging Jones Falls is just lovely. On a hot summer day, the trail (approximately a mile from Falls Road to the trestle) is shady and cool. People walk their dogs (on leads), ride bikes or jog along the trail, which is paved with road millings. Wider and certainly safer than the old trestle, the new bridge provides a vantage point for viewing the stream. As the leaves begin to change this autumn, the Falls Road trail—indeed the entire park—will be ablaze with color.

Young people and volunteers from Robert E Lee Park Nature Council (RELPMC) help maintain the park. Board member Howdy Knipp and his Trails Committee work in conjunction with the County to keep the trails open. Baltimore City high school students from the Baltimore Conservation Leadership Corps have worked on trails and erosion control. Council members and others routinely carry plastic bags to pick up trash or wield clippers to check the overgrowth of porcelainberry vines and multiflora rose, two of several alien invasive plants impinging on the pathways.

Park rangers continue to arrange and lead creative programs for children and adults. Late summer programs included mud



A young couple and their son check out the newly built trestle in Robert E Lee Park.
Photo: Nancy Worden Horst



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OPEN HOUSE

October 28

Lower School:

1:00 – 3:00pm

Middle & Upper Schools:

3:30 – 5:30pm

TOURS WITH PRINCIPALS

October 5

November 2

November 30

8:45 – 10:30am

day, which involved making mud pies and sculptures and being hosed off by Brooklandville firefighters; Harry Potter's birthday celebration, which featured broom- and wand-making and culminated in a fast-paced game of Quidditch; a fairies and elves day; and a cricket crawl night hike. Visit relpnc.org/events for a list of events, and call 410-887-4156 with questions or to register.

Guided walks showcasing the park's rich history and its unusual flora and fascinating history are set to resume this fall. The Baltimore Bird Club invites you to visit a variety of habitats to observe songbirds, shorebirds and raptors. For more information on bird walks, email: jafjsc@verizon.net or KeyWeststyle@gmail.com.

With passage of a \$215,000 bond bill to fund a natural play area for children called Acorn Hill, RELPMC members are hopeful that the County and landscape architects can begin work on design and construction soon.

RELPMC is planning its second annual meeting for mid-October. Watch our website, relpnc.org, for details. Please join us for one of our programs or volunteer to help with an activity or on a committee. ❖

RELPMC partners with Baltimore County to provide high quality nature and recreational opportunities for the public at Robert E Lee Park.