

# College Gardens Civic Association

816 Fordham Street  
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## College Gardens Environmental Science and Multidisciplinary Study Possibilities for Middle and High School Students

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Dear Educators,

I am writing to present you with a wonderful study opportunity, for middle and high school students, that exists within the College Gardens neighborhood. The opportunity, outlined briefly below, concerns the pond in our park that is adjacent to College Gardens Elementary School. The current pond is a picturesque old farm pond in the middle of the park that dates from at least the 1940s. It is no longer connected to any nearby streams. However, as part of a Storm Water Management (SWM) initiative by

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the City of Rockville, the pond is to be replaced by a large SWM pond, with construction starting in summer 2008.

The purpose of the new SWM pond is to control the quantity and quality of storm water that enters the nearby Watts Branch stream system, and ultimately into the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay. You can see a plan of the new pond at <http://www.opticalwonders.com/cgca/CollegeGardensPark.pdf>.

The College Gardens neighborhood and its Civic Association would like to organize a formal before-and-after scientific study of the pond over a 5-year period in order to document its transition from an isolated and static state to a dynamic and integrated stem of Watts Branch. We anticipate changes in the flora and fauna of the pond and surrounding area as a result of its new status as a SWM facility. The pending change in the nature of the pond presents a unique opportunity to document its transformation into a mature SWM pond as well as the ecological changes to the downstream parts of Watts Branch.

We are looking for educational partners in this study. We recognize that such a study may not fit into any present curriculum. However we are hoping that Middle Years Program, International Baccalaureate, and other students may be interested in taking up a part of the overall study as an independent study project. We also believe that teachers would find this an interesting study project. In addition, there are several well-qualified individuals within our neighborhood who may contribute their time and expertise.

**Proposed 5-year pond study:** This draws on the fact that the work for the new SWM pond and park won't start until summer 2008.

1. The study would start in Fall 2007.
2. With Julius West and/or RMHS participation, facilitated by the College Gardens neighborhood, students would characterize the biology of the current pond and surrounding flora and fauna. Another opportunity would be to document the history of the pond and its context within Rockville and the farm. This would take place from Summer/Fall 2007 through Spring 2008.
3. The building of the new pond and park also may be of interest to some students in the context of how a large construction project is retrofitted into an existing community.
4. After the new pond is in place in Fall/Winter 2008, the biological study would resume. This time, the study would start with the new SWM pond as it is first constructed, when plants are new and not yet fully established.
5. Over the following 4 years, students would document the progression of flora and fauna in the pond. There would also be an opportunity to measure cyclic changes in the forebay as debris collects and is removed.
6. Each year of the project could also provide opportunities for budding artists, journalists, and videographers to develop their skills in documenting changes in the pond and park.
7. Funding: Karen Carp of College Gardens has pledged \$1000 a year over five years for material support. The Civic Association is actively searching for matching funds, and does not anticipate problems in finding a match, from among environmental non-profit groups, the City, and nearby businesses.

I would like to come to your schools to talk to you about this study and your possible participation. College Gardens would like this to be a neighborhood project and we welcome your ideas in making this plan a reality. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

Mark Pierzchala  
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