

Arlington County, Virginia

June 2003

# **BELLEVUE FOREST**

## **NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PLAN**

# Bellevue Forest

## Neighborhood Conservation Plan

March 2003



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# Executive Summary

The Bellevue Forest Citizens' Association began exploring the possibility of entering the Neighborhood Conservation Program in the early 1990s. A survey was developed and completed, but because of the general contentment in the neighborhood, languished.

The Bellevue Forest Citizens' Association, motivated in large measure by the Bellevue Forest Garden Club, formed a Steering Committee, met with County NCAC staff, and formally notified Arlington County of its intent to complete a Neighborhood Conservation Plan for the Bellevue Forest area in 2000.

A neighborhood survey was prepared by residents from various areas of Bellevue Forest, and the entire neighborhood was informed of this intent through publications of both the Bellevue Forest Citizens' Association and the Bellevue Forest Garden Club newsletters. Through Bellevue Forest On-Line, Bellevue Forest's e-mail service, recruitment of active participants was again solicited. Neighboring civic association plans were reviewed, as were those in other sectors of the county. Additional input was sought at the Association's Annual Meeting in May of 2001.

Since the planning effort began, the Association has

- Developed a written survey and mailed or hand delivered it to the 415 homes in Bellevue Forest.
- Compiled the survey results and identified public improvement, quality of life, and safety goals.
- Conducted walking/driving surveys of the neighborhood.
- Drafted a plan and made it available to all interested property owners. To insure that all neighbors had the opportunity to review the plans, drafts were situated at various homes throughout the neighborhood and the locations advertised in both the Bellevue Forest newsletter and via e-mail. Since the Association maintains an accurate list of residents in the community and was in its triennial process of updating the Neighborhood Telephone Directory, all households were reached.
- Made available a second draft for final submission to the County.

The plan is intended to guide immediate as well as future development of the neighborhood, to be a living, viable document for current and future improvement recommendations.

## **Neighborhood Description**

Bellevue Forest nestles in northern Arlington County between Military Road and the George Washington Memorial Parkway (overlooking the Potomac River) on the west and east, and Gulf Branch and Donaldson Run and Potomac Overlook Regional Park on its north and south. It consists of exclusively single-family dwellings, 415 homes in all. Among the features most appreciated by its residents are the natural settings, the gentle hills and valleys, its quietness and relative security. Neighbors particularly appreciate

the proximity to our four parks where limitless outdoor activities are available, the quality of our local schools, and our reasonable proximity to commercial areas and facilities.

### **Neighborhood Goals**

Bellevue Forest residents are most concerned with preserving and enhancing the quality of life and the natural beauty of the neighborhood.

## **Recommendations**

Project ideas have arisen through a careful assessment of real needs and by gathering the individual ideas and suggestions into one community voice. As such, recommended projects or changes have been developed only where the majority of residents have clearly articulated a desire. All neighbors who would be immediately impacted by any proposed change will be involved in the project development process.

Based on the survey, neighborhood meetings, e-mails, block reviews, and discussions between members and County staff, a list of twenty-one recommendations was developed. The major issues are as follows:

### **Noise**

The problem most frequently identified by neighbors as being a source of concern is the noise, particularly that of aircraft, and to a lesser extent, from the George Washington Parkway. After 11 p.m., Bellevue Forest takes on the cast of a rural area with its quietness and solitude.

### **Military Road Traffic**

Several of Bellevue Forest's families live directly on Military Road. All bus commuters and school children must cross Military Road in order to reach morning bus transportation or to reach our neighborhood elementary, middle and high schools. High speeds, documented through a recent Public Works survey, and a number of accidents make Military Road a barrier to enjoyment of life in Arlington. Although it is classified as a minor arterial, it is still a "neighborhood street" and adversely affects a number of surrounding neighborhoods. Traffic calming on Military Road is a top priority of the community.

### **Land Use and Zoning**

To date, zoning and land use designations have been appropriate. However, because of the size of our lots, neighbors are extremely concerned over in-fill housing, pipe stem development and townhouses. Bellevue Forest expects future development to be in keeping with the existing fabric of our community.

## **Internal Traffic**

While internal traffic is somewhat limited by the design of the neighborhood, speeding is of great concern to our residents, particularly on Pollard Street and Roberts Lane, our longest continuous roads. There are also a number of 3-way intersections that at one time had stop or yield signs. These signs were removed during road repairs and never replaced. A third problem is that many of our streets are "blind". This is the result of rolling hills and sharp curves. These areas present a serious threat to the safety of children, pedestrians, bicyclists and dog walkers. Efforts to reduce speeding cars and improve basic safety of residents and visitors is a priority of many of our residents, especially the residents of these thruways.

## **Infrastructure**

### **Neighborhood Streets, Curbs, Gutters, Lighting and Sidewalks**

The quality of service provided to Bellevue Forest regarding streets has been generally outstanding. The vast majority of curbs and gutters are in good repair, and this report seeks to target those isolated areas where repairs are currently necessary. Some of our drains lack metal bars, which represents a safety hazard, particularly for animals and small children.

Lighting tends to be uneven, with most areas adequately lit and others quite dismal. This is particularly true near the entrances to the parks.

Sidewalks are non-existent in many parts of Bellevue Forest, and the residents in 2002 appear generally content with this state of affairs, with one major exception. A sidewalk is needed on North 31<sup>st</sup> Street between Military and Pollard for a number of reasons. Pollard and N. 31<sup>st</sup> Street is a blind intersection; it is along the path to a school bus stop (North Pollard and 30<sup>th</sup> Road) where at least a dozen children are gathered and returned daily. It is the major route for the Metro bus stop on the other side of Military for all Bellevue Forest residents. The only homeowner whose property faces North 31<sup>st</sup> Street wants a sidewalk. A walk is currently preferred on only one side of the street.

## **Public Safety**

While some households were concerned about crime, most consider Bellevue Forest to be a safe community. Vandalism and consumption of alcoholic beverages by teenagers are the most common problems. The neighborhood, however, was the target of a highly skilled silver-thief in the 1980's, and the transients and con-artists have made their presence felt here. Because of the high number of retired residents, senior fraud is also a source of concern. Another source of concern relate to the parks. Since parks border three sides of the neighborhood, our community is affected by visitors to the area. There are frequent problems with trespassing, littering, drug and alcohol use in the parks. There is no "police patrol" which could reduce these problems. The Forest remains outside the response timeframe of 3 minutes for EMS and Fire Service, to which there appears to be no solution. Police responsiveness to situations in Bellevue Forest has been good as a general rule.

## **Animals**

Animals, both domestic and wild, are a concern to a number of our households. Dogs in particular lead the domestic pack, with concerns focused on barking, loose and menacing dogs, and dog droppings. Among the wild animals, deer and raccoons are frequent visitors to homes, causing concern among approximately 8% of our families.

## **Beautification and Ambience**

Because Bellevue Forest is a woodland community with an active garden club, beautification within the community is not considered necessary. However, a number of residents would appreciate working with the pumping stations to enhance their horticultural landscape.

Our residents who live near Gulf Branch or Donaldson Run pumping stations would like to be assured that odious sewer vapors will not occur on hot summer days.

## **External Amenities**

The covenants originally governing the development of Bellevue Forest ensured that it was strictly and totally a residential community. There are no commercial establishments, parks, schools or other non-housing establishments within the actual boundaries of Bellevue Forest. However, many of the neighbors wished to go on record in support of a wide variety of Arlington services and facilities. Principal among these are the four parks: Potomac Overlook Regional Park, Donaldson Run Nature Area, Zachary Taylor Park, and Gulf Branch Nature Center. Efforts to preserve, protect and enhance these facilities is a major desire of Bellevue Forest residents, and the residents hope and expect that any changes to these facilities would be brought to the neighborhood's attention.

# HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Bellevue Forest has had a rich and varied history since pre-Cambrian times. Geological shifting has, in fact, defined much of the history of our neighborhood, limiting both settlement and development.

Our neighborhood was the site of Native American presence from the Paleo-Indian Period (10,000 - 7,000 B.C.) forward. Yet Indian settlements were few, and much of the activity on Bellevue Forest and surrounding lands appears to have been nomadic or temporary in nature.

When Virginia started its march toward settlement, Bellevue Forest lands were part of the vast tracts awarded to faithful subjects of the British monarch, beginning with King Charles II. Bellevue Forest has its origins in three such awards -- to George Mason, to Richard Taylor, and to Lewis Hipkins.

While much of Alexandria and south Arlington were enjoying rapid, and both commercial and residential, development, the area from which Bellevue Forest was carved was largely farmlands and forest. It was not until the mid-1800's that Horatio Reid built a house in what is now Bellevue Forest, and the Simons and Reid families operated a strawberry business. In 1851, Gilbert Vanderwerken acquired the land abutting Military Road to pasture a herd of horses that he used for his omnibuses from Aqueduct Bridge to the Navy Yard.

One notable physical alteration occurred during the Civil War, when, in the fall of 1861, Military Road was built to connect Fort Ethan Allen with Lee Highway, forts to our south, and other strategic locations for the Union forces.

Shortly after the Civil War, a home that would figure prominently in the history of Bellevue Forest was built on Glebe Road. "Bellevue", at 3311 North Glebe Road, was built, in part, of timbers used in the construction of Fort Ethan Allen. The estate extended to the palisades through "a wilderness." The home was owned by Charles and John Grunwell, (the former having been Chairman of the Board of Supervisors and a member of the selection team who chose the current location of the Courthouse).

It was not until 1938 that Bellevue Forest was changed from a primarily "wilderness" area (although several houses had been built since the Civil War) to a neighborhood. On December 23, 1938, the Grunwell brothers filed the first section of a plat for the 120-acre subdivision named Bellevue Forest after their family home. John Grunwell played a principal role in the development, bringing his skills as architect and surveyor to bear.

Bellevue Forest was platted in 18 sections over a period of 20 years. Similar to many post-Depression, pre-world War II subdivisions, it was planned with broad, curvilinear streets. T-intersections and cul-de-sacs were carefully planned. Lot sizes were large, generally between one-third and one-half acre, and because the first sections were built around the natural features, lots are irregularly shaped.

A number of covenants governed the original Bellevue Forest, including limitations on "use of any temporary structures as a "habitation", "lot-line fences", "noxious things", "nuisances to the neighborhood", "farm animals", "signs and...disturbing noise". No businesses, manufacturing establishments, public entertainment facilities, schools, dance halls, resorts or other public facilities were permitted, and two covenants prohibited apartments. Another covenant sought to govern the streetscape. "No structure shall be built upon or moved onto any lot unless it shall conform to and be in harmony with existing structures in the immediate locality." Lots were originally limited to no less than 6,000 square feet; that number was later increased to 8,000 square feet.

It is believed that the Grunwells made it a policy to file an additional section of the plat only after the majority of lots in the previous section sold. Two more sections were filed close on the heels of the first; Section Two was filed in 1940 and Section Three in 1941. The three plats constituted the first 146 lots in Bellevue Forest. A total of 28 houses were completed before the shortages brought by World War II ground residential construction to a halt.

After the war, the Grunwells formed Bellevue Forest Corporation and hired real estate broker George Mason Green as corporation president and agent. Post-war construction grew gradually: one house in 1946; three in 1947; eight in 1948; nine in 1949; 19 in 1950. Construction accelerated rapidly in the 1950's, with 70 houses being built between 1951 and 1953. The plats for Section Four were filed in 1947 and for Section Five in 1951, for a total of 199 lots. Bellevue Forest Corporation was given decision-making powers previously granted property owners.

While Bellevue Forest was carefully planned, a great deal of latitude was given as to architectural styles. In fact, of the ten styles of homes prevalent nation-wide during its formative period, nine are found in Bellevue Forest.

Beginning in 1954, development patterns changed. Some trees were stripped from lots, and houses with similar facades and plans were built side-by-side. Nearly 150 homes were built between 1954 and 1958. Although they were similar in appearance, they offered the luxuries of the time. It was during this period that Bellevue Forest experienced one of the few documented inconveniences during its development - the blasting of the area between it and the Potomac River to make way for the completion of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

By 1958, little open land remained in Bellevue Forest. Thirteen houses were constructed between 1959 and 1993. Few vacant lots remain.

Bellevue Forest has changed little over the years. Houses have been enlarged. Homes have been passed down from generation to generation. New families have arrived. A few new styles have been added to the rich architectural panorama. Efforts to depart from single-family homes or to reduce lot size requirements have met with fierce resistance.

Bellevue Forest is rich in history and takes great pride and thrives on its natural setting. In many respects, Bellevue Forest has changed little over the millions of years since its original foundation was laid. It is still hilly, with steep ravines into meandering

streams. It is still a forest, and in most cases, houses seem to have been carefully planted among the trees. It is still a neighborhood in which people truly enjoy living.

The full history of Bellevue Forest may be found in the Appendices.

## NEIGHBORS AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Bellevue Forest is a stable neighborhood in a somewhat transitional county. While the Neighborhood Conservation survey focused on only the most basic of statistics, anecdotal information is extensive. For census-based demographic information, see Appendix C.

Of the 160 households completing the survey, 21% have lived here for at least 31 years (survey) and a number have lived here since the community began. According to survey responses, 18% have lived here for between 21 and 30 years; 21% between 11 and 20 years; 20% between 6 and 10 years; 20% for less than 1 to 5 years. A survey conducted in 1998 indicated that 17 of the Citizens' Association's past presidents were still residents of Bellevue Forest. (The Citizens' Association was formed in 1945.)

The ages of our residents reflect not only the longevity of the neighborhood but also its dynamic properties. Under "Age Range of Family Members", we have 22 families reporting children aged 5 or younger; 39 with children in the 5 - 17 range; 23 with young adults between the ages of 18 and 34. The largest group reported family members aged 35 to 64, and the second largest group was composed of members 65 or older. Several of our residents are well into their 80s and 90s.

Bellevue Forest is primarily a community of homeowners. According to the survey responses, 99% own their own homes; 1% rent. Our Neighborhood Directory, published for at least the past decade, confirms this figure, although the census data indicates that the figure is closer to 5%.

Neighbors have structured opportunities in which to get together. In addition to the Citizens' Association's annual meeting, there is an annual Corn Roast and 4th of July Parade (weather permitting). Quincy Street has a yearly block party. When Halloween falls on a weekend, a party is held for the children. The Garden Club, organized in 1968 and a veritable institution in Bellevue Forest, meets monthly September through May. Our neighboring Church of the Covenant fulfills the function of "community center" for all indoor events, given the lack of one within Bellevue Forest; Potomac Overlook Regional Park has made its facilities available to us for major outdoor events. Each year, in December, Bellevue Forest hosts a "Holiday Lights" event whereby decorated homes can be honored for their creativity in a variety of categories.

Communications within Bellevue Forest are facilitated in several ways. A periodic newsletter is sent to all households advising them of major issues within the community and of all events. Bellevue Forest On-Line links over 25% of our households for much more frequent updates on news and needs and makes available to interested neighbors other on-line publications, including the newsletters of the Civic Federation, the Arlington County Public Schools, the Police Department, and communications from the Neighborhood Advisory Committee, among others. It also allows unofficial surveys, notifies residents of meetings and other community-wide events or program offerings, and garners opinions on problems as they arise. Two new features under development are a formal eGroup, which allows residents to communicate with one another quickly, and the development of a web site ([www.BellevueForest.org](http://www.BellevueForest.org)) with links to major organizations within Arlington County. Through e-mail and other sources, neighbors

are crafting the content of the web site to insure that it meets the wide array of needs and interests within the community.

Another anecdotal characteristic of the neighborhood is its love of the outdoors. One of the few areas of internal concern is the issue of fencing. The original covenants prohibited the installation of line fencing, and many within the community have suggested reinstatement of that particular covenant. Many of Bellevue Forest's residents consider an unimpeded view of the trees and other plantings to be one of the neighborhood's most appealing characteristics, and the installation of any structures that negatively affect this are viewed with strong disfavor. Neighbors are also frequent users of all three parks that either abut us or are in close proximity, Gulf Branch, Potomac Overlook, Donaldson Run Nature Area and Zachary Taylor Park. Several have become trained stream monitors to help improve the quality of the waters that run past (and under) us. Residents participate in the ParksWatch program of the Civic Federation and many of the children of Bellevue Forest have been reared on the programs offered by Gulf Branch Nature Center and Potomac Overlook Regional Park. Our children also participate in a wide variety of community programs, including sports, the arts, church groups, and scouting.

The hills of Bellevue Forest provide neighbors with aerobic exercise, and many of them avail themselves of these hills for running, jogging, biking and walking (with and without children and dogs). The milder months give rise to high levels of these activities, and with the change to daylight savings time, special reminders are given that children will be out and about. This is particularly critical given the fact that a number of our sections have no sidewalks and have winding roads with blind spots.

Many of our neighbors are actively involved in the Arlington community. Churches, schools, non-profits and citizens' committees all benefit from the input and concerns of residents of Bellevue Forest. This not only benefits the organizations and topics involved but also helps keep residents informed of a wide array of activities in the county.

While Bellevue Forest does have problem areas, the survey confirmed that most of these are isolated or involve situations, such as speeding on Military Road, at our boundaries. Many will be handled directly with the agencies that have authority for correcting the situations. Only those most glaring, and with decided safety consequences, will require more wide-scale assistance.

## COMMUNITY GOALS

Bellevue Forest residents are most concerned with preserving and enhancing the quality of life and the nature of the physical and natural surroundings in the neighborhood. The most important goals are:

- ♥ Preserve the neighborhood's character as an area of exclusively single-family homes;

- ♥ Preserve the open, uncrowded nature of the neighborhood by restricting pipe stem development and monitoring in-fill development and making certain it is consistent with the surrounding homes;

- ♥ Ensure pedestrian and bicycle safety by focusing on areas where sidewalks, curbs and gutters or street lighting may be inadequate or poorly maintained and specifically ensure the safety of children through the creation of a sidewalk between Military and Pollard on 31<sup>st</sup> Street and traffic calming and a sidewalk on the Potomac side of Military Road;

- ♥ Ensure vehicular and pedestrian safety by developing appropriate traffic-calming devices on Military Road;

- ♥ Announce Bellevue Forest's existence with appropriate signs at the entrances to the neighborhood;

- ♥ Encourage a neighborhood spirit that will preserve the friendly, open relations between neighbors, ensuring that Bellevue Forest continues to be an attractive place in which to live;

- ♥ Promote the strict enforcement of current noise and other flight restrictions governing National Airport;

- ♥ Ensure the continued existence of the many county amenities that Bellevue Forest residents enjoy, particularly Potomac Overlook Regional Park, Donaldson Run Nature Area, Zachary Taylor Park, and Gulf Branch Nature Center.

# NOISE

While living in Bellevue Forest is a treat for the eyes, extraneous sounds are a torture on residents' ears. When one looks at a map of Arlington County, one can see that National Airport's main runway is aimed almost directly at Bellevue Forest homes. Most residents bought their homes with an understanding of the flight plans and paths. The situation has changed for the vast majority of residents since the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. More planes are now traveling overhead as a result of actions at the Federal level. These actions have resulted in increased noise on landing because of low altitude and flying west of the Potomac River. Take offs using full power are now common, producing more noise. Furthermore, the hours of National were extended beyond 11 p.m. in the evening, and planes are now allowed to awaken us by flying before the original 7 a.m. starting time, and in many cases, as early as 6 a.m. Studies abound describing the adverse effects of noise on human health. Accordingly, aircraft noise is the primary issue that concerns the majority of our residents.

The environment outside our homes is constantly bombarded with jet plane noise, making gardening, walking, or talking to the neighbors an unpleasant experience. The environment inside our homes is not immune either. Spring and fall no longer are opportunities for open windows and enjoyment of the moderate temperatures. Instead, residents must keep them shut, unless they wish to compete with an estimated 65 decibels, as often as once a minute. Despite claims that airlines are flying quieter jets, sleep is no longer uninterrupted in Bellevue Forest. Flights are common as late as 1:45 a.m.

Aircraft thunder is a major community problem. It lowers property values, produces stress, and spoils enjoyment of the surrounding natural areas.

The northeastern section of Bellevue Forest is subject to another noise pollutant, that of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The trees modulate the sound somewhat when they are leafed out, but most homes north of Roberts Lane and east of Monroe hear the whiz of tires year round.

***Recommendation 1: Arlington County government continue its efforts to ensure compliance with existing noise levels; that periodic monitoring of airplane noise be conducted using state-of-the-art technology; that fly-overs, particularly by helicopters of a non-police or military nature, be prosecuted.***

***Recommendation 2: That studies be conducted to determine additional natural sound reduction techniques along the George Washington Parkway.***

# LAND USE AND ZONING

Bellevue Forest is solely a residential area, composed of single-family homes. The County has expressed this in two ways, in Zoning Ordinance and in the General Land Use Plan.

In the Zoning Ordinances, Bellevue Forest has two areas with different minimum square footage per house. One section has R-20 houses that must have 20,000 square feet per lot. This designation applies to all houses east of the north segment of Monroe Street, as well as all houses east of 3606 Roberts Lane. R-10 houses in these areas must have 10,000 square feet per lot. This designation covers the rest of the houses in Bellevue Forest and houses that were built before the Zoning Ordinance Categories went into effect. There is also a section in Bellevue Forest, in the area of North Oakland Street and North 30<sup>th</sup>, where 40 houses are under a restrictive covenant necessitating lot sizes of no less than 8,000 square feet for additional houses to be built. According to legal opinion, 80% of the affected residents would have to support removal of the covenants for a change to occur.

In the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) the County also describes how land is used. Low Density is the description of Bellevue Forest lands. This is characterized by 1 to 10 housing units per acre. It should be noted that this is inconsistent with current zoning in our community. Under R-20, there could be only two houses per acre; under R-10, four houses per acre.

We are truly a bedroom community. There are no commercial or other non-residential zoning allowances within our borders. Nevertheless, there are several issues about which the residents are concerned. In order to focus on the issues, Bellevue Forest's concerns can basically be split into two areas: growth and other issues. The former is a large concern in the survey; the latter is considerably smaller but important to those who raised the concerns.

## **GROWTH**

This topic is important across the metro-area, and we are no exception. We had divided the issue into 7 areas in our survey. It should be noted that this was a concise survey: we do not have in-depth descriptions of all the specific concerns. The survey simply asked respondents to check those areas that concern them. However, when residents were presented with the option called "other, please explain", they replied in their own words. From these responses, we can get a sense of some of the strong feelings.

The residents were very concerned about growth. In various segments of the survey, the respondents stated that they want to preserve open space, maintain current traffic, and preserve the neighborhood. The residents also decried the clear-cutting of trees that has been the hallmark of new construction.





Specific examples will be illustrative. Even though we are zoned for single-family homes, Bellevue Forest recently had someone unsuccessfully attempt to construct townhouses. As a result, this topic was the area that concerned the largest number of respondents. These concerns are intertwined and involve building new homes between or behind existing housing. The pipe stem is distinguished from in-fill in that it has a long driveway to connect it with the street. Both eliminate existing green space, affecting the privacy of the adjacent lands, increasing run-off to the Chesapeake Bay, and adding more car traffic to Bellevue Forest.

***Recommendation 3: That the current zoning designations, R-10 and R-20, found in Bellevue Forest be preserved to protect against higher density development.***

The General Land Use Plan indicates that Bellevue Forest could be converted to less restrictive zoning. Low-residential density has an array of options while Bellevue Forest is almost entirely zoned R-10 according to County maps, with the exception of a small section at the end of Roberts Lane that is zoned R-20. Any effective Conservation Plan should preserve these larger land designations for the foreseeable future.

**House Size of New Construction:** Many respondents felt that new houses "are too large and out of scale for the neighborhood". The residents also expressed their dislike of the radical departure in style that the new construction displays. Some erroneously believe that County Zoning Ordinances have been avoided by the owners of these unusual structures. In fact, these larger units are built in accordance with the existing rules. BF has not been designated an historical district, so there are only three major criteria to meet: height, distance from the street, and the coverage (how much of the total property is covered by structure). In many parts of Bellevue Forest, there is nothing to prevent similar construction from continuing.\*

Referring back to the townhouse issue mentioned earlier, the only document that stopped the new construction was not one that the County generated. Rather, a covenant among the neighbors prevented the new construction. Some neighbors have expressed interest in pursuing this concept to preserve the neighborhood that attracted us when we bought our homes. While the covenants supercede zoning ordinances under the law, the County currently does not enforce Covenants, leaving the expense up to the individual associations rather than having it clearly recorded on plats of record.

***Recommendation 4: That covenants be entered into the plat book of record to prohibit construction plans/development beyond what the covenants allow or that County policy take into consideration existing covenants prior to allowance of development inconsistent with covenants.***

***Recommendation 5: That the zoning ordinances be adjusted for each neighborhood as a percentage of landmass to ensure that over-development does not occur.***

## **OTHER**

This area of concern was a mixture of several perceived violations. Autos garnered many complaints. Residents were concerned with unused cars parked on the street as well as wrecks parked in driveways. Concern was expressed several times about the state of disrepair of certain homes. Woodpiles in front yards and tarped trailers were also noted. The Code Enforcement office (228-3232) is happy to send an inspector to determine if there are violations, if they receive a specific address to check.

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\*Randomly choosing streets from Bellevue Forest to check the square footage revealed one street on which only 10% of the lots possessed the square footage to support a second housing unit. Another street had 7 of 15 houses that had sufficient space to support, one, two, or in one case, 3 extra houses.

# TRAFFIC CALMING

## MILITARY ROAD TRAFFIC

Military Road, which slices across the western boundary of our neighborhood, is infamous as a speedway for commuters. In the metropolitan area, many thoroughfares could be identified as roads where trucks and automobiles, for one reason or another, exceed reasonable speeds. To the citizens of Bellevue Forest, Military Road has a quality comparable to speedways. It is a formidable and dangerous barrier, walling the neighborhood off behind the onrushing zoom of traffic.

For all motorists and most pedestrians, it is impossible to leave Bellevue Forest without venturing onto or across Military Road. There are no sidewalks on the Bellevue Forest side of Military Road. Children cannot safely walk to their elementary school, to any pedestrian crosswalk, or to the Taylor School crossing guard without risking their lives traversing Military Road. Older pedestrians, including daily riders on Metro Bus, do not have it any easier.

Bellevue Forest is bounded on three sides by streams and woodlands accessible only by foot. To the north is Gulf Branch and to the south is Donaldson Run. The eastern border is George Washington Memorial Parkway. It runs between Bellevue Forest and the Potomac River and has developed into an unintended superhighway. The George Washington Memorial Parkway is a loud irritant, with no clear solution.

This is not the case with Military Road, our formidable western roadblock. In our survey, Bellevue Forest residents' responses to questions about Military Road range from anxiety to terror. Almost 70 percent express concern about speeding on Military Road. Those who worry about the difficulty of getting out of Bellevue Forest because of traffic on Military Road number 85.25 percent. The percentage of residents concerned about vehicles exceeding the speed limit on Military Road rises to 93.71 percent. Clearly, the Bellevue Forest Citizens' Association places the highest priority on some type of control to a perception of out-of-control speeding on Military Road.

At the intersections of both 30th Street and 31st Street, most drivers trying to leave Bellevue Forest need to make left turns. The problem with cars speeding south on Military Road is compounded by poor visibility. At 31st and Military, even when automobiles are parked legally on Military Road, they obstruct vision. When northbound/uphill buses stop on Military Road, drivers on 31<sup>st</sup> Street simply have to wait until the bus departs. At both 30th and Military and 31st and Military, people needing to cross Military Road to the bus stop have to be prepared to run. Three other Bellevue Forest streets intersect with Military Road. At these, drivers trying to exit the neighborhood are (probably; no statistics exist) more evenly divided between those wishing to turn left or right. These three intersections are fairly closely clustered, so that a driver or pedestrian standing at the bottom of Pollard Street can easily see the intersections of Military Road with 36th Street and Quincy Street.

Of the five exits to which Bellevue Forest drivers depend for their daily forays from their homes, four have bus stops. Only Pollard/Military lacks a bus stop, but the bus stop at Quincy and 36th are only a few yards away. Hills and curves make visibility a

serious problem at every Bellevue Forest street that intersects with Military Road. Again, south to north, these five streets are 30th, 31st, Quincy, Pollard, and 36th. A majority of residents believe northbound Military Road should be reduced to one lane, perhaps with additional bike lanes, as it nears Beechwood and 30th Street. At a minimum, they want the right lane painted to make it clear that it is for right turn only.

Many respondents to the Bellevue Forest survey seem to think, in one way of expressing it or another, that intersections (especially at 30th and 31st with Military) are a tragedy waiting to happen. Speeds on Military Road are such that collisions have little chance of being minor. The term "fender bender" has no relation to potential accidents on this hilly stretch of Military Road.

Resident-respondents' suggestions for solving the dangers include:

- A timed stoplight.
- A stoplight triggered by approaching or speeding cars.
- A stoplight manually triggered by pedestrians wishing to safely cross Military Road.
- Four-way stop signs.
- Narrowing Military Road to one lane in each direction.

Notably rare among the suggested solutions are increased police patrols. This may be because residents know that police enforcement of traffic laws on Military Road, partly due to of staffing limitations, is too infrequent to be successful. Anecdotal evidence indicates that police interceptions are difficult because of the terrain (especially for cars coming downhill toward 31st and Military) and, in practice, too infrequent to pose much of a long-term deterrent effect.

Another source of concern, one outside the arena of speeding, but clearly within the context of safety, are the trees on the hillside on the Potomac side of Military Road. There have been any number of occasions when severe storms have resulted in trees falling into Military Road. Because of the blind nature of the curve coming from Marcey Road, there is little or no warning of an object in the street.

***Recommendation 6: That the Departments of Public Works, Transportation, and Police develop options (leading to concrete plans) for reducing speed on Military Road. These should be consistent not only with the road's so-called "minor arterial" designation but with its role as a dangerous and unwarranted barrier to a large residential neighborhood.***

***Recommendation 7: That plans be developed to insure the safe passage of Bellevue Forest children to Taylor Elementary School, both during and after school hours.***

***Recommendation 8: That consideration be given to options to stop erosion on the East side of Military Road south of Beechwood.***

***Recommendation 9: That additional bike lanes be considered for Military Road, thereby reducing speed and passing problems that are much more likely to occur on a three to four lane road.***

# TRAFFIC CALMING

## INTERIOR TRAFFIC

Tremendous concern exists over the speed of some vehicles on Bellevue Forest's two "straight-aways", North Pollard Street and Roberts Lane. Pollard Street is a long, straight, but extremely hilly, street bisecting Bellevue Forest. It is a necessary, and frequently used, street for walkers, joggers, dog-walkers, and children on bicycles. It is also necessary for anyone who lives on its Potomac side. There are currently no sidewalks on North Pollard Street, nor is there a strong interest in developing them.

Roberts Lane runs perpendicularly to North Pollard, and unlike its counterpart, has long stretches where sidewalks are available. It is also a little less hilly and seems to encourage greater speeds. A great number of children live along Roberts Lane and its arteries, many of whom ride bikes, skate, and skateboard.

A second concern is that many 3-way intersections in Bellevue Forest have no traffic indicators of any nature (some were removed during street construction/repairs and were never replaced). This creates particularly hazardous conditions along North Pollard from N. 30<sup>th</sup> to Oakland Street.

A third concern focuses on residents of the 3000 block of N. Quincy Street. Their street, particularly the southern portion, is windy, narrow, and, as with most other streets, a cul-de-sac. Because of the peculiarities of Arlington's street naming practices, many lost vehicles, including 18 wheel trucks, find their way to North Quincy, finding themselves trapped. They then go through the dangerous ordeal of backing out.

***Recommendation 10: That the Police Department work with the neighborhood on developing a variety of options for reducing speed along Roberts and North Pollard.***

***Recommendation 11: That Public Works replace or install signs at all 3-way intersections in Bellevue Forest.***

***Recommendation 12: That serious consideration be given to a traffic-calming device at the intersection of N. 30<sup>th</sup> Street and North Pollard.***

***Recommendation 13: That consideration be given to signage that indicates that the southern section of North Quincy is a dead-end/non-thru street where at least a dozen small children live and play.***

# INFRASTRUCTURE

## **SIDEWALKS, CURBS, GUTTERS, STREETS AND LIGHTING**

The highest points of Bellevue Forest are the Roberts Lane corridor and one section of Quincy Street. From these points, the land gradually (sometimes abruptly) sweeps downward. From Roberts north and east, the land drops into Gulf Branch and the George Washington Parkway, respectively. To the south, the land sweeps down to Oakland St., up toward Pollard and N. 30th, then down again to the lowest sections at the foot of N. Pollard and 30th. From N. 30th Street, the neighborhood crosses Donaldson Run and rises up to the Beechwood Circle section of Bellevue Forest. To the west of Roberts, the land rises to the highest points on N. Quincy, and then down to Military Road. (See map) The hills and valleys, winding and pitched roads in Bellevue Forest create a number of challenges and perhaps higher than typical wear and tear on the surface infrastructure of Bellevue Forest. Included under this broad category are: Drainage (grates, pooling water, gutters); Road Surfaces; Curbs; Lighting; and Sidewalks, the most challenging problem of all. Although all are somewhat interrelated, they will be dealt with separately.

### **DRAINAGE**

The issue of water run-off was addressed in three separate questions: 1) Are there areas in Bellevue Forest where storm drain grates are needed (e.g., grates that would cover the drains); 2) Are there any areas in Bellevue Forest where we have water pooling or drainage problems? 3) Are there problems with gutters or drainage on your street? The responses to each of these questions were remarkably similar.

Specific problems of drainage have been identified in the following locations:

- The intersection of Beechwood Circle and Military Road
- The 3600 block of North Lincoln Street
- The intersections of Military Road, N. Quincy and North 31st Street
- Run-off from The Washington Golf and Country Club onto Military Road
- The 3100 block of North Monroe between 3120 and 3108.
- The backyards between N. Peary and N. Piedmont, particularly behind 3500 N. Peary Street. A number of respondents identifying this site reported that "the county has lines they don't maintain". Presumably, there is a storm drain somewhere in that rather wooded section.
- The 3400 block of North Peary.
- The 2900 block of Oxford Street, where water runs down the street and into a driveway instead of a drain.

Much broader problems exist in two locations of the neighborhood. The first involves the entire N. Pollard to N. 30th Street to Oakland sections. Here, grates/gutters/drainage and water pooling problems have been identified at 30th and N. Oakland (3061) where an open drain has been identified (plus 3066 and 3000 N.

Oakland) ; 30th and N. Pollard; several sites along N. 30th St.; 30th Road and 30th Place; and the 3800 block of N. 30th St.

North Quincy Street, particularly in the 3000 - 3100 block, reports serious problems, the first of which is a grate with separations of 13 inches. All three of the grates are missing bars as well. This obviously constitutes a safety hazard, particularly for small children and animals. Options suggested by the neighbors in this area include flushing one of the storm drains ("clogged with debris") and the use of a dry well or containment pool. Particularly affected, according to the survey, are the houses at 3040 and 3049; houses from 3055 to 3049; and the houses from 3050-3040 N. Quincy

The neighborhood's first response will be to send applicable portions of this report to the Department of Public Works with a request for a meeting to determine a) what can be done, and b) whether it should fall under the auspices of public works and can be dealt with promptly or whether it should fall under the Neighborhood Conservation Plan. Some type of elevation and/or diversionary plans are obviously necessary.

***Recommendation 14: That a meeting be held with the Department of Public Works to address the most serious drain and drainage problems immediately and that a plan of action and review be developed for other aspects of drainage issues.***

## **ROAD SURFACE**

While 79.05% reported no problems with the paving on their streets, 20.95% reported minor to serious problems. Problems with paving/road surface ranged from aesthetic ("crooked road stripes not needed") to interest in having a more formalized schedule of repaving ("should be paved about every 3 years"; "time to resurface street"), to the quality and personal effects from road resurfacing ("there is a repair to Military Road that causes my house to shake when the buses go by between 3141 and 3147"; "gas company dug up street and sidewalk -- sloppy asphalt replacement").

The latter comment was written by a respondent on N. 36th Street, where the problems appear to be more serious than just sloppiness. The 3500 block of N. 36th Street reports problems as a result of water pipes bursting; pavement with large cracks; and a similar concern that gives an historical perspective:

- "North 36th Street in the vicinity of 3533. Numerous times over the past 20 years the street surface has sagged and has to be repaired because subsurface water pipes have leaked and eroded the supporting ground. The last time this happened, about 1 1/2 years ago, the pipes were repaired in two locations and the street was resurfaced. However, sagging reoccurred within 2 months. Probably the entire pipe needs to be replaced and the street surfaced -- removed from top to bottom so that the entire length of the old pipe can be examined and repaired or replaced if necessary."

- Another section that is reportedly sinking or sagging is on Pollard Street between 30th and N. Oakland, where the street "was resurfaced but asphalt is sinking into holes for gas lines".

- North 30th Road reports a number of potholes.

- Asphalt breaking up, potholes and rough patches are reported on N. Oakland and 30th Road. North 30th Road, Street and Place all report pavement problems, and all reported drainage problems as well.

- Potholes and cracks are reported in the 3400 block of N. Peary.

- North Quincy Street, the site of a drainage problem, also has one area in need of repair/restoration. A number of families reported a problem between 3133 and 3166 N. Quincy. All reported either a rough bump or a large dip and the need for repaving and leveling.

Extensive resurfacing has occurred in the neighborhood between the time the survey was produced and the time the results were tabulated. It is possible that some of these problems have been addressed. However, as with drainage, the neighborhood believes that a meeting with Department of Public Works officials would better clarify recent work and future needs to help further define the need for Neighborhood Conservation initiatives.

***Recommendation 15: That the Department of Public Works, in cooperation with the Citizens' Association, contact these homeowners to determine whether or not the problems still exist, and where they do, that steps be taken to institute satisfactory repairs.***

#### **CURBS**

Of those responding, 98.74% have a curb in front of their home. Of these 57.24% reported that their curb was "intact"; 23.68% felt theirs was "somewhat intact"; 11.18% considered theirs "average". Nine respondents, or 5.92%, found their curb "somewhat disintegrating" and 3 families, or 1.97% reported theirs to be "disintegrating".

The following are the block or house numbers of homes reporting "somewhat disintegrating" or "disintegrating" curbs:

- 3500 block Military
- 3600 block N. Piedmont
- 3619 N. Piedmont
- 3000 block N. Pollard
- 3100 block N. Quincy ("large piece broken off") (There were 3 separate responses from this block of N. Quincy)
- 3800 N. 30th St.
- 3900 block N. 36th St.
- 3600 block N. Monroe
- 3072 N. Oakland St.
- 3100 N. Oxford
- 3500 N. Peary
- 3600 block N. Peary



Only two respondents reported not having curbs. Both homes indicated an interest in having the county install curbs in those areas. The homes are in the 3000 block of North Peary and in the 3000 block of North Monroe.

***Recommendation 16: That curbs so designated, if still in disrepair, be repaired and that, in the two cases where requests have been made, installation be considered. Furthermore, a visual survey should be conducted of the neighborhood to determine other areas where curbs might be absent.***

***Recommendation 17: Install sidewalk, curb and gutter in areas where supported by affected residents.***

## **LIGHTING**

Lighting presents an interesting challenge. In response to the question, "Do you have the following problems with lighting on your street or nearby streets?" 71.43% identified too little lighting; 10.71% indicated too much lighting; 5.36% felt lights were aimed in the wrong direction; and 12.50% had other concerns requiring explanation. It should be noted that of the 160 respondents, only 56 responded to this lighting question.

In response to the question "Are there streets in Bellevue Forest, other than yours, where you think additional lighting is needed?" 90 households responded with 80% considering other lighting to be adequate and 20% responding that additional lighting is necessary. Clearly, the numbers indicate preference, with a majority preferring the lower lighting. As the comments within the lighting category were reviewed, it became abundantly clear that a) frequent power outages are a maddening problem; b) many residents would prefer buried wire and cable (vulnerable overhead lines contribute to power outages); c) a regular bulb replacement program should be instituted; d) there is interest in a replacement program with the newer, shorter lighting systems IF Arlington engages in widespread replacement programs; e) a separate lighting survey should be conducted.

While this could certainly change in the future, in 2002 the only clear agreements are that better lighting is needed at entrances to the parks and that assistance might be necessary to redirect the lighting away from house windows and more toward streets and sidewalks. Consensus through non-consensus is that assistance is necessary to better evaluate the lighting needs of Bellevue Forest.

***Recommendation 18: That the lighting needs at park entrances be evaluated and enhanced and that Bellevue Forest work with the appropriate agency to determine ways to enhance or redirect lighting in those areas where residents have identified more minor problems.***

***Recommendation 19: Install coach or Carlyle lights (or the lighting style currently recommended by the County) as desired by affected residents and identified in street light projects.***

## SIDEWALKS

There are relatively few sidewalks in the older section of Bellevue Forest, and as such, there is no County map available to us to delineate where sidewalks do and do not exist. However, perhaps the most burning issue within Bellevue Forest is the need for sidewalks. While most residents would prefer more sidewalks, the vast majority without sidewalks want to keep it that way. However, a sidewalk is absolutely essential from a safety perspective on at least one street. (See following page for pictures.)

The exceptionally steep portion of two blocks of North 31<sup>st</sup> Street from Military Road to N. Pollard has no sidewalks. Yet, it is one of only five entrances into the community and is the site of a commercial bus stop (Military at 31st) and the major pedestrian path to one school bus stop (30th and Pollard). True stories of near-misses are all too common, affecting not only adults on their way to work and children on their way to school, but also any individuals walking or riding bicycles from the fringes of the neighborhood into the interior and vice versa. Efforts to move the elementary school bus stop have not met with success, but efforts have been renewed to try to add a second school bus stop to the 3100 block of N. Quincy Street to reduce the daily migration of children from Quincy Street to Pollard over this very dangerous pedestrian “man-trap”.

This situation is exacerbated by the fact that it is impossible to see either pedestrians or animals when one is heading south on Pollard to round the corner onto N. 31st. It is impossible to see pedestrians heading east on 31st Street from Military Road to Pollard. There are four houses on either side of N. 31st, only one of which directly faces or fronts on the street. It is important to note that the owners of that home WANT a sidewalk in front of their home. The neighborhood formally wishes to request that engineers survey the site and take appropriate action.





Before viewing the neighborhood street-by-street, it should be noted that comments from the neighborhood expressed interest in having sidewalks that will a) enable children to safely walk from Bellevue Forest to a lighted cross walk traffic light that allows safe crossing of Military Road to Taylor Elementary School and b) to Marcey Road and the Donaldson Run swimming pool and Potomac Overlook. Traveling in the direction of these facilities, there are no sidewalks on the east side of Military Road from 31<sup>st</sup> Street to Marcey. Other areas of interest are sidewalks along the length of Roberts Lane (there are currently no sidewalks on the 3400 and 3500 blocks of Roberts) and sidewalks along the length of Pollard.

Regarding Roberts Lane, two of the neighbors in the 3400 block were interested; others were silent. One of the neighbors on the 3500 block did NOT wish sidewalks; the others were silent. As to Pollard, the vast majority of those respondents in the 3000 block were opposed to sidewalks; in the 3100 block, five of eight respondents FAVORED sidewalks. It is suggested that a short poll be conducted to determine the interest along these arteries.

As to the other roads in Bellevue Forest, the following is the status:

Beechwood Circle was overwhelmingly opposed to sidewalk installation.

Kenmore's sidewalks, where they exist, were in good condition.

Lincoln's sidewalks were in good condition.

Military Road's residents who responded and who do not have sidewalks do not want sidewalks. Where they exist, they are in good repair except for a disintegrating sidewalk in the 3200 block and another in the 3500 block.

Monroe Street has one home without a sidewalk, and the owner would

support the installation of one. All other homes with sidewalks report them in good repair except for one in the 3600 block.

Nelson Street's sidewalks are in good repair. One household, in the 3600 block, does not have a sidewalk and would like one installed.

North Oakland Street does not have sidewalks, and the vast majority of residents support the status quo.

On Oxford Street, the 2900 block does not have sidewalks and wishes to maintain that status. In the 3000 block, all that exist are reported in good repair with the exception of one that is "disintegrating".

North Peary's sidewalks are in good repair with the exception of two: one in the 3400 block; another in the 3600 block.

North Piedmont's sidewalks are intact.

On North Quincy Street, the majority of residents do not wish the addition of sidewalks.

North 30th Place reports sidewalks intact.

The 3700 block of N. 30th Road reports sidewalks intact. In the 3800 block, the two neighbors who responded are interested in the installation of sidewalks.

On N. 30th Street, again sentiment is against the installation of sidewalks, although interest was expressed in a sidewalk on the park side of the street.

N. 31st St., as mentioned before, has one house fronting the street, and the owner wishes a sidewalk. Residents of the seven houses with their sides to N. 31<sup>st</sup> St. stated no objections to sidewalks.

N. 36th Street's sidewalks are intact, except for a disintegrating sidewalk reported in the 3500 block and two reported in the 3900 block.

***Recommendation 20: In light of these findings, it is recommended that consideration be given to installation of a sidewalk on one side of N. 31st Street between Military and Pollard with a crosswalk with a pedestrian-activated traffic light installed at Military and 31<sup>st</sup>, and that attention be given to repair of those few sidewalks that are "disintegrating."***

***Recommendation 21: Install sidewalks in areas where supported by affected residents.***

# ANIMALS

While many residents within Bellevue Forest enjoy the setting and all that follows from living in a forest, there are nonetheless some concerns. Under the heading "animal-related concerns," 8.56% responded in the affirmative. Broken down, this included 31.41% concerned with "dog droppings"; 17.28% with loose cats; 15.71% with wildlife; 13.09% with loose dogs; 11.52% with barking dogs.

With respect to dogs, while the majority of dog owners heed the leash law and scoop laws, there are those who flagrantly have not done so. The Citizens' Association has communicated the animal ordinances via newsletter and e-mail. It has made copies of the applicable ordinances available to citizens at the annual meeting. Its agents have contacted the Animal Welfare League when the identity of a "chronic" offender's owner can be established. It will continue these efforts and contact animal control to determine what other steps might be available. As to barking dogs, there are also ordinances governing chronic offenders and nuisance situations. Again, efforts toward education will be made and help from animal control will be sought. Outside the confines of the neighborhood, concern was frequently expressed at the lack of leash law observance and enforcement within the neighboring parks. Suggestions were made that the parks post signs advising users that dogs must be on a leash at all times and that fines be given those who continue to defy the laws.

"Loose" cats are in a different category, because while the Animal Shelter strongly encourages "indoor only" cats for reasons of health and safety, to our knowledge, there are no ordinances that regulate the conduct of the cat population. Some of the concerns appear to stem from cats that take advantage of bird feeders as profitable hunting grounds. In the past, suggestions have been made to "bell" the collars of all cats that frequent the outdoors. Collars with ID tags (and bells) help to ensure not only the safety of cats but increase the safety of the bird population. This suggestion will continue to be made, as will reminders that all cats should be inoculated against the rabies virus. Suggestions are also made through newsletters that children in particular avoid approaching any animal whose behavior patterns are unknown to them. "Loose" cats also present a problem in a community with a number of "invisible fences" designed to keep dogs confined to a yard. When cats engage in "baiting" maneuvers, residents are informed and asked to keep the offender inside. (Even the most well trained dog will endure the pain of shock when pushed too far!)

Wildlife presents a unique challenge in a forest. Deer, possums, squirrels, raccoons, and occasional foxes bring an assortment of challenges. While Nature Center staff and wildlife rehabilitators strongly recommend against feeding wildlife other than birds, the food that birds enjoy are occasionally enjoyed by others, and the lack of food supplies in the neighboring parks occasionally lures wildlife into residential communities. The Cooperative Extension Service offers extensive literature on deer-unfriendly plantings and on repellent strategies. The Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia recently hosted a seminar on learning to co-exist (happily) with wildlife. Efforts will continue to make this information more widely available to neighbors.

There is, however, at least one house within Bellevue Forest, a rental property, where a condition of renting requires the feeding of wildlife. This was stipulated in the

will by which the non-profit organization came into possession of the house. Because of the serious consequences brought about by the rabies epidemic in this area, discussions will be initiated with the Animal Shelter on how to properly address this situation. One of the neighbors did report sighting "rabid" raccoons, and efforts will be made to educate the neighbors on how to identify an infected animal and the importance of giving all wildlife wide latitude, given the possibility that raccoons and foxes in particular might be carriers even if they don't manifest the most common symptoms.

***Recommendation 22: That Animal Welfare and other applicable agencies work with Bellevue Forest to secure compliance and enforcement of existing laws, and that similarly, surrounding park areas cooperate in an effort to educate users of animal control ordinances.***

# PUBLIC SAFETY

Bellevue Forest continues to enjoy a reputation as a crime-free neighborhood. Survey responses indicated that only 3.4% of the residents consider crime to be a major problem. When the question was more narrowly defined, and the question asked, "Is crime a concern?", 44.56% responded "no", 33.76% responded "did not know" or were "not sure", and 21.66% responded yes but did not provide an explanation. Regarding the question as to whether increased police patrols were desired, 25% responded "yes"; 38.13% responded "not sure"; and 36.88% answered "no".

There is an obvious reason for our relative comfort with our "safety factor". Bellevue Forest is surrounded by parkland to the south, east and north. The western portion of the neighborhood is bordered by Military Road. Many of the law enforcement problems are a direct result of our location: traffic problems (many, many), nuisance related problems in and around the park areas, and animal complaints.

The lack of certainty in these cases is perhaps most illustrative. While we were apparently a favorite stomping ground of a well-known silver thief in the early 1980's, Bellevue Forest has enjoyed at least a decade of relative security. Crimes do occur, however, ranging from vandalism to burglaries, transients and bow hunters (only one case); drunkenness and the remnants of teenage misadventures, generally in our parks or the streets near our parks; littering and speeding.

As illustration, in 1999 there were 15 criminal complaints made where police reports were generated. Of the 15 reports, there were 2 burglaries to homes, 2 larcenies from homes or lawns, 3 larcenies from auto, 1 unauthorized use of an auto, 4 vandalisms to autos, 1 vandalism to a home, 1 assault, and 1 trespass. In 2000, 13 criminal complaints required police reports. These included 3 frauds involving home repair or home service, 3 larcenies from homes, 2 vandalisms of homes, 1 larceny from auto, 3 vandalisms to cars, and 1 assault. There was one field observation report on a weapon (probably our bow and arrow hunter). The statistics for 2001 are quite similar.

Of all the crimes committed during the past decade, however, the one that concerns us most is fraud against seniors. Many of our residents are retired, and many are widows or widowers. Special concern exists that the isolation of many elderly residents, not only in Bellevue Forest but throughout Arlington, leaves them more susceptible to victimization.

There is some interest in revitalizing Neighborhood Watch. The neighborhood makes a concerted effort to alert neighbors to crime or crime patterns through the newsletter and On-Line, although many of our older residents do not have computers. Many civic association meetings have focused on presentations from the police to help us ensure our safety.

There appears to be little interest in having police patrols increased. However, since police visibility is a major deterrent to crime, increased daytime visibility on the part of the police would be of value as would increased patrols in the areas of park entrances, particularly in the dusk to evening hours.

There is concern that Bellevue Forest remains outside the three-minute timeframe for fire service and EMS response. The latter is of particular concern given the fact that many of our residents are older and statistically have a higher need for such services.

Overall, however, Bellevue Forest remains a safe and secure neighborhood.

***Recommendation 23: That discussions take place with the Police Department to determine the best strategies to insure the continued safety of the Bellevue Forest Community.***

# **BEAUTIFICATION** **AND CONSERVATION**

Bellevue Forest occupies a lovely section of Virginia, naturally, biologically, horticulturally and geologically. Residents generally take pride in their homes and surroundings, and nature has provided most of the detail.

Only one area appeared in the Bellevue Forest survey regarding beautification, and that focused on the pumping stations. One is located at one of the major entrances to our neighborhood, on North 30<sup>th</sup> Street; enhancing the plantings or screenings would enhance both the pumping station and Bellevue Forest. The other is located between Bellevue Forest and Rivercrest's N. 36<sup>th</sup> Road. It is our intention to work with DES when the public art aspect focusing on the pumping stations arises; this is anticipated sometime in 2004.

It is further the intention and practice of Bellevue Forest to insure the preservation and protection of our watershed areas. To this end, every effort has been made to insure compliance with Chesapeake Bay Ordinance provisions, including, but not limited to, educating the community on proper fertilization techniques to insure reductions in nitrogen, new gardening techniques – including rain gardening which facilitates greater absorption and lessens run-off, and proper planting to reduce erosion.

***Recommendation 24: That discussions be held with Public Works in cooperation with Cooperative Extension to determine what horticultural enhancements to the pumping stations might be made to the exterior areas abutting both Military Road and North 30<sup>th</sup> Street as well as that on N. 36<sup>th</sup> Road.***

***Recommendation 25: Identify locations where neighborhood signs can be installed, design and install them.***





# EXTERNAL AMENITIES

## **NO NEIGHBORHOOD IS AN ISLAND**

Bellevue Forest is truly a special neighborhood. However, part of its attraction for residents is the services, programs and facilities outside our borders. Any part of neighborhood conservation must, of necessity, include those external factors that support the livability of not merely the neighborhood but the community as a whole.

There are several "crown jewels" for Bellevue Forest. Undoubtedly, the top four for our neighbors are the parks that either abut us or are in such close proximity as to be a part of us. Gulf Branch Nature Center, Potomac Overlook Regional Park, Donaldson Run Nature Area and Zachary Taylor Park are true treasures to the residents of Bellevue Forest.

Both Gulf Branch and Potomac Overlook share history with us. Our geological and geographical similarities are indisputable; and, as with Zachary Taylor Park, the earliest uses to which the land was put bear marked similarities. Our ecosystems are sometimes indistinguishable, and while humans have a far greater presence in Bellevue Forest than on the lands of our adjacent neighbors, this doesn't seem to have much effect on the fauna that frequently roams the hills.

Besides longevity of historical similarity, the parks offer amenities that are truly irreplaceable. In addition to the hiking, biking and general enjoyment of nature provided by Potomac Overlook, this regional park has taken a leadership role in education. It is a leader in the Rediscovering the Schoolyard movement; its "coffee hours" and music programs, as well as its Open Houses, attract many of our residents. The programs offered by Potomac Overlook cover the gamut of interests among people of all ages. Potomac Overlook has worked hard to be a good neighbor, offering opportunities for senior Scouts to earn their Eagle Rank or for the younger Scouts to advance in rank; partnering with organizations such as the Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia to educate the public in urban horticulture, including its recently opened Demonstration Organic Vegetable Garden, and to tie residents to their horticultural roots of the past.

The archaeological endeavors of the Park have provided countless children and adults with a better appreciation of the role and behaviors of the earliest inhabitants. Yet Potomac Overlook is not tied to the past. It has also taken a leadership role in modern conservation -- not merely of land and flora and fauna but also of energy and other non-renewable resources.

Similarly, Gulf Branch has offered programs for the whole community -- such as Pioneer Day and programs for our school-aged children such as the Junior Naturalist Program. Even the toddlers are treated to a wealth of knowledge at the hands of the staff naturalists.

The history of Gulf Branch is as important to us as is our own. On June 12, 1966, Arlington County opened the Gulf Branch Nature Center, located at 3608 N. Military Rd. Dedicated to the study and conservation of nature, it was the first facility of its kind in the County. The acquisition of the nature center property actually began years earlier, with

the purchase of 1.1 acres from Elwood Williams in 1962. Many parcels were purchased over the years, until finally in February of 1965, the County Board acquired title to the 6 acre estate of John Davis, which included the stone house that now houses the nature center.

On November 29, 1965, William L. Hughes, Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks, declared that the former Davis Property was to be designated as "Gulf Branch Nature Center". Gulf Branch Nature Center is part of the Parks & Natural Resources Division of the Arlington County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources. Gulf Branch is one of four offices of the Conservation & Interpretation Section, which also includes the Long Branch Nature Center, Fort C.F. Smith Park and Historic Site, and the Park Ranger Unit. The mission of the Conservation & Interpretation Section is to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of, and therefore a desire to protect our natural and historic resources. Gulf Branch Nature Center is open to the public year-round, six days a week.

The nature center operates as a small museum, featuring interpretive exhibits on a variety of natural and cultural history themes. The professional staff of park naturalists offer educational programs open to the public, for audiences ranging in age from preschool to senior citizen. Educational programs are also available on request to organized groups, such as schools, clubs, and scouting groups. The nature center staff is a resource for natural history information, such as assisting citizens in the resolution of wildlife conflicts, or providing information and identification of native plants and animals. Additionally, the nature center staff provides assessments and consultation on wildlife management issues for the purpose of conservation and preservation of these resources.

Gulf Branch Natural Area encompasses 38 acres. Several woodland trails meander through the mature hardwood forest of oak, hickory and tulip poplar. One of the major features of the park is Gulf Branch, the stream which bisects it, and which gives the nature center and natural area their names. Early names for this stream included Spring Branch and Falls Branch. Finally, a committee appointed by the County Manager in 1935 renamed the stream Gulf Branch, apparently out of a belief that the name "Falls Branch" could be misinterpreted to imply a connection to the Little Falls of the Potomac.

Gulf Branch enters the Potomac just below Little Falls. This location has made this area of Arlington a natural site of commerce and exchange since prehistoric times. In 1972, nature center staff, along with students and professors from the Archeology Department at American University, undertook an archeological dig along Gulf Branch. The artifacts found included projectile points, knives, stone mauls and pottery. Analysis of these items show that the major occupation of the site occurred around 600 B.C. This time period coincides with the transition between the Early and Middle Woodland periods of Native American culture. A major attraction of this area then, as it remains today, is the fertile fishing grounds. These early people were making camps here in order to harvest sturgeon, shad and herring from the Potomac.

Gulf Branch Nature Center is a quartz and field stone building constructed in 1921. During the early 1930's silent film star Pola Negri rented the house. Negri, who died in 1987, was a well-known star of the silent screen and is credited as being the first film actress to portray a "vamp" on the screen. She was a contemporary of Lillian Gish

and Mary Pickford, and was engaged to Rudolph Valentino at the time of his death. Other buildings at the nature center include the Robert Walker Log House and the Blacksmith's Forge. The log house was constructed in 1978-1979 and dedicated to the Women's Club of Arlington "for its generous contributions to the culture and heritage of the community." The structure contains logs and stones from a house built by early Arlingtonian, Robert Walker, in 1871. That house was located on the grounds of today's Old Glebe Park. The house, owned by the Walker family for forty years, was modified and expanded many times over the years. In 1967 the house was acquired by the County and remodeled to become the Glebe Recreation Center. Then, before the recreation center's demolition in 1978, timbers and stones from the 1871 building were rescued and used in the construction of the log house located at Gulf Branch. The cabin is used in educational programming to interpret early life in Arlington. Another building on the nature center grounds is the blacksmith's forge, which was built between 1980 - 1982 and is operated by the Blacksmith's Guild of the Potomac. This non-profit organization meets twice monthly at the forge, and is dedicated to teaching and keeping alive the art of Blacksmithing.

Zachary Taylor Park is the "walker's park", a place to enjoy nature at its best. Recent efforts to remove invasive plants have added to the pleasure residents find in the park.

Because we concentrated the Bellevue Forest Survey on internal concerns and needs, our methodology of querying our residents on the external amenities they value most (other than the parks) was an informal request via Bellevue Forest On-Line. Nonetheless, we have received a number of enthusiastic responses that we feel important to share with the County. As a result of our method, we considered it wisest to share these responses in the residents' own words. A sampling follows:

## Voices of the Community

The volunteer fire department, Cherrydale Library tax assistance!!!!!!  
gypsy moth control, large object trash pickup, recycling, leaf pickup and mulch availability, tree banding assistance, upkeep of school grounds for games, the public schools, themselves, the Arlington Aquatic Program at the high school pools, the recreational association teams (soccer, basketball, etc.), the assistance given to theatre companies and the arts in general, the bike paths, the dog runs... I'm really starting to appreciate Arlington.

In addition to Zachary Taylor Park and Cherrydale Library, the other two services that I really value are the public tennis courts (and lights) - I most use Marcey Road, Quincy Park, and Bluemont courts - and Metro bus service provided by Bus 22. Each time they threaten in a budget exercise to do away with any one of these four things (park, library, lighted tennis courts, and bus), I write my letter saying I will support every school bond (my kids are well out of school) and every other bond issue if they just leave me these four things!

"What we like outside the neighborhood" stuff: \* Arlington desperately needs a boathouse facility for rowing etc. \*Dog Park \*Bike trails \*Foot paths etc.

The services/facilities other than the wonderful parks and Cherrydale library are the large trash pick-up and post-snow removal and sanding. In addition to the parks already mentioned, we use the tot lots on Harrison Street and Lyon Village. Our family loves the Central Library. Also, I value the extensive recreation offerings through the county (we are taking the Music Together mom/tot music class). Finally, I love that the county offers free mulch at the mulch piles across from Marymount.

What programs/features/services OUTSIDE our neighborhood do you really value in Arlington? \* Madison Community Center -- I've started taking my father-in-law to senior exercise classes there, and my son and his friends love to use the Brama Pit exercise room. I have neighbors who also used the exercise facilities at Thomas Jefferson. \* Arlington Library's online service, including account access and extensive research resources. We have one of the best public library systems in Northern Virginia. \* Curbside recycling that doesn't require sorting, and takes all the junkmail and magazines. I only wish they could recycle corrugated cardboard at the curb also, but the new recycling center on Quincy St. in Ballston is great, too. \* Bicycle paths \* Athletic fields -- I hope they develop the complex near Crystal City. My son's travel soccer team's "home" field last fall was in Occoquan, because field space is so limited in Arlington. Arlington's fields are so overused they are of very poor quality, with much of the grass worn away to just clumps. Arlington teams have a hard time recruiting and keeping top players because our field access is so limited. \* Responsive county services -- I love calling the pothole hotline and finding the holes have been repaved by the next day.

Those three places (Pot. Overlook, Gulf Branch and Cherrydale) definitely are at the top of my list of great programs/services we have. Also, the Park Department's offering of summer camps - (though I can't say much about their upkeep of fields - excuse me, I'm getting off the point) and the dog park at Madison Center and Madison Center itself, as well as the playgrounds that are all over Arlington. I assume these programs are supposed to be close by things?

Metro

Nellie Custis/I-66 trail and all the other bike/hike trails.

I appreciate the general responsiveness of County staff when I have need to deal with them..for example, the public works folks....I've called on them a lot to deal with potholes, unsightly thoroughfares in the County, etc...they always respond..e.g., the gas cuts on Roberts Lane...they got finally patched up nicely because I dealt with the County and through them, the gas folks...otherwise we would have pits still on Roberts and one on Nelson St. Yesterday I had a lengthy discussion with staff about the recent assessments. I got a very full and courteous reply, I had a major problem with my cable TV reception for months. the County cable

person helped me resolve the problem very quickly once I contacted her...and so on...so somehow I think we as a neighborhood should give recognition and a kudo to the service of the County staff.

The W-L and Yorktown pools are used extensively by our residents. They are old and crowded but serve a variety of competitive and recreational needs. We value the programs at the Madison Center, both County sponsored and dance classes by the Arlington Dance Theater.

Replying to "Outside our neighborhood" programs/services: dog runs/parks (and I don't have a dog). Other services that I really appreciate are leaf pickup & leaf recycling bags, and recycling pickup.

We have used the Madison Playgroup Co-op with both our children as well as the Barcroft facility for gymnastics classes.

\* Arlington Aquatics program - I'm an annual member at the Yorktown pool and our young children use it, too. I feel very fortunate that the Arlington high schools open up their pools to the public in a very user-friendly way. My exercise regime would be at a loss without the Yorktown pool! \* Area playgrounds: Woodmont Center off of Fillmore St.; Madison Center; Harrison St.; new playground at Geo. Mason and Wash. Blvd. is terrific!

The Arlington Farmer's Market; the Clarendon ethnic foods; the garbage collection special services; the mulch delivery services; all the wonderful Arlington Parks; the parking area over route 66. North station post office open until 9pm! leaf collection; county garbage collection!

How about the Ellipse Arts Center, Madison Senior Center, Lubber Run Outdoor Theater, our cultural diversity in people, foods and restaurants.

Add to your programs/services: Arlington Central Library and its online services Arlington County rescue services are great.

I do have a favorite spot outside of BF--it's the Animal Welfare League's shelter on Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington.

These are small indications of the many aspects of Arlington that residents of Bellevue Forest truly appreciate, aspects Bellevue Forest would enjoy seeing preserved, protected, and, where feasible, expanded.

# APPENDICES

## BELLEVUE FOREST ITS HISTORY

*Dedicated to the Children of Bellevue Forest so they may appreciate one of their earliest "playgrounds" and with special thanks to the late historians Eleanor Lee Templeman, Bellevue Forest resident, and to C.B. Rose, Jr. Appreciation is also given to John F. Weiler of the **Pimmit Run Chronicler** who provided us with an historical chronology and to Jan M. Eakins who so carefully researched the architectural history of Bellevue Forest for her Master of Arts in Historic Preservation Degree in 1998 for Goucher College.*

Bellevue Forest is a quiet neighborhood of single-family homes in the northern reaches of Arlington County. It nestles between Military Road and the George Washington Memorial Parkway (overlooking the Potomac River) on the west and east, and Gulf Branch and Donaldson Run and Potomac Overlook Regional Park on its north and south. Approximately 415 families make their home on large, wooded parcels of land.

From an historical perspective, our neighborhood began its march toward its present configuration nearly 2 billion years ago, and the events of the Paleozoic, pre-Cambrian Age, as well as the Mesozoic's Triassic and Jurassic periods had a dramatic effect on the development of our land into modern times. It certainly distinguished our development from that of our more southerly neighbors in Arlington and Alexandria.

It was during the pre-Cambrian time when molten rock from beneath the earth's crust, began to cool. Granite bedrock in the area is found from 300 feet above sea level in northern and western Arlington to 700 feet below sea level in the Potomac River to the south and east. The result, in a nutshell, was the formation of the "fall line," the broad, irregular zone where the Piedmont and Coastal Plain meet, where abrupt changes in stream gradients are marked by falls and rapids. The Palisades, steep embankments along the Potomac River between Rosslyn and Chain Bridge, testify to our geological history.

Continued tilting, folding, and faulting ultimately gave rise to the earliest swamps and first signs of life in Arlington, estimated at 100,000,000 years ago (Cretaceous). Gravel, sand, and clay were washed into our area during the Mesozoic era and the Tertiary periods of the Cenozoic era as well as during the late-Tertiary and Quaternary periods (55,000,000 years ago).

The animals, contemporary residents as well as cougar and undoubtedly a few black bear, and before them the dinosaurs, wandered the hills of Bellevue Forest and surrounding areas. Trees and early ancestors of our smaller plants took root in the soil for millions of years before humans arrived.

Much is known of the Necostin Indians, the Native Americans who first met Captain John Smith in the early 1600's. However, Bellevue Forest, because of its close proximity to the Potomac, Gulf Branch and Donaldson Run, was also home, however migratory, to the earliest known populations. Evidence around Bellevue Forest has been found to document the presence of nomadic hunters during the Paleo-Indian Period (10,000 - 7,000 B.C.); during the Archaic Period (8,000 - 2,000 B.C.), when major climatic changes occurred and food gathering was added to hunting as a means of sustenance; during the Transitional Period (2,000 - 500 B.C.), when hunting and

gathering was supplemented with fowling, fishing, and oystering, and during the Early Woodland (500 B.C. - 950 A.D.) when agriculture began and when small dispersed villages appeared. During the Late Woodland (950 A.D. - 1600 A.D.), agriculture became more widely practiced and villages were established. Settlements moved from the highest grounds to areas along streams and the Potomac River (but still out of reach of flooding). The Indians began to grow tobacco, mostly for ceremonial purposes, and to weave fabric. C.B. Rose's book, ***Arlington County, Virginia*** has a map clearly showing an Indian village site between Gulf Branch and Donaldson Run, today's Bellevue Forest. It was Native Americans from the Powhatan Confederacy who greeted Captain John Smith in 1608. Just seventy years later, there were no Indians residing in Arlington although the Iroquois' practice of raiding continued to be a deterrent to development until at least 1719.

Just as Smith was stopped by the falls during his first visit to the area in 1608, so, too, was development much slower to reach North Arlington than the communities to the east and south. Arlington, unlike Alexandria, had no natural ports. There were no easy routes to the west; the topography was hilly, punctuated by soaring cliffs and steep ravines. Development was slow, and the area of North Arlington remained relatively quiet and truly "country" during the earliest periods of our country's settlement.

The history of Bellevue Forest that most closely parallels the emergence of the American colonies begins with King Charles II who granted land to his loyal followers. (See Appendix I for a complete chronology). In 1690, this grant was further defined as that land "between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers to their first heads or springs" and was consolidated under one proprietor, Thomas, Fifth Lord Fairfax.

Thomas Lee, proprietary agent for the Northern Neck, patented lands (1719) immediately to Bellevue Forest's north, from Gulf Branch, including the mouth of Pimmit Run, to control the riverbank. Five years later, Colonel George Mason received a grant for two hundred fifty acres two miles below the Little Falls (1724). The following year, Richard Taylor received an inland grant for 280 acres adjoining the Mason patent (1725). Moving forward to 1767, Colonel George Mason's grant of 250 acres was regranted to his son, George Mason of Gunston Hall. In 1778, Richard Arrell received a grant for 15 unclaimed acres south of Gulf Branch between the Lee and Mason grants. Arrell's tract was regranted (presumably from colonial authorities -1796) as 12.5 acres to the heirs of Lewis Hipkins, who had died in 1794. Modern-day Bellevue Forest was carved from and is part of the land history of the Taylor, Mason and Hipkins Grants. (See Appendix II for the title chain for Bellevue Forest and Appendix III for the street breakdown of current homes.)

While development continued apace in the southern part of Arlington County during the 1700's and early 1800's, the land that is now Bellevue Forest remained virtually unchanged. By the mid-1800's, because Bellevue Forest stems from three historical tracts of land, the history gets somewhat complicated. The river portion of the Mason Tract had been purchased by the Simmons family, "the first known residents of the area". Their home was located "about 100 feet northeast" of a holly tree, perhaps the oldest tree in Northern Virginia, on what was the Horatio Reid home on Roberts Lane. The Simmons' daughter Mary and her husband George Reid subsequently built a barn and storage shed for his strawberry business. At its peak, 120 crates of strawberries were taken daily to Washington wholesalers for shipment.

In 1851, the land abutting what is now Military Road was acquired by Gilbert Vanderwerken to pasture a herd of horses that he used for his omnibuses from Aqueduct Bridge to the Navy Yard. Many gardeners of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have noted how fertile our soil seems! One notable physical alteration was made to the landscape during the Civil War, when, in the fall of 1861, Military Road was built to connect Fort Ethan Allen with Lee Highway and forts further down the river. "This road, about three miles long, was laid out mainly through a broken and densely wooded country. In part, it is the Military Road of today, and it was built in three days.

Shortly after the Civil War, a home that would figure prominently in the development of Bellevue Forest was built on Glebe Road. "Bellevue", at 3311 North Glebe Road, was built, in part, of timbers used in the construction of Fort Ethan Allen. The estate extended to the palisades "through a wilderness". The story of the home, which came to be known as Grunwell's Bellevue, is a story best told in the words of its source, Eleanor Lee Templeman:

Just after the Civil War, Lieutenant Alfred Grunwell was stationed at a camp on Minor Hill to the west. One day he became lost in the woods of the Vanderwerken farm while attempting a short cut to Chain Bridge. He emerged from the forest to find himself on the lawn of a house. On the veranda a pretty young lady was reading. With cap in hand, he inquired the way, but added a few caustic remarks concerning the worthlessness of the country through which he had been floundering. It happened that the criticized area belonged to her father, and she promptly took exception to his uncomplimentary remarks. However, her mettle must have been amused and interested the young officer, for he henceforth formed a habit of getting lost at every opportunity. By the time the troops were demobilized, he had acquired an advancement to captaincy and a bride (Jane Vanderwerken). Their children were Charles Grunwell...and John Grunwell....

Captain Grunwell took Jane to Florida where he was stationed during the difficult reconstruction period. His fairness and popularity in "alien territory" are proven by his subsequent election to public offices in Florida, first as county clerk and then as judge. They returned to Arlington at the time of the death of Mrs. Grunwell's brother Charles Vanderwerken, who had been manager of the family's quarry business. The elder Mr. Vanderwerken asked Judge Grunwell to take over the management, and as an additional inducement provided the home, Bellevue.

It was Charles and John who would one day develop Bellevue Forest. (Charles Grunwell, as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors and a member of the site selection Commission for the new courthouse, pleaded to have the courthouse built in its current location rather than in the more populated southern part of the county.)

At around the same time that "Bellevue" was built, part of Bellevue Forest was surveyed in July of 1866 by Oliver Cox, pastor of Mount Olivet Church. The Reid farm was the object of the survey, in anticipation of a sale of part of the land to the Gardiner family who purchased a ten-acre plot that "included the mouth of Donaldson Run and property up over the crest of the palisades." In 1876, this plot was mortgaged to George W. Linville who in turn foreclosed in 1893.

During the 1880's, Horatio Reid, the son of Mary Ellen Simmons and George Reid, built a home "on the crest of the gentle rise west of the homestead". It was constructed of sturdy dovetailed timbers on a dry-wall stone foundation two feet thick. (The Reid home burned down before 1900, but its basic structure is that of the Rathbone (Wyatt) house built in 1946.)

The 1900's arrived, and still the lands of Bellevue Forest remained primarily farm and forest. In the early part of the century, only one change appears to have occurred. In or around 1906, William Florian Roberts purchased the ten-acre Linville tract and later the 31 acre Reid farm. On this land he built a summer home, designed by his friend and noted architect Appleton P. Clark. The home was located at the brink of a cliff with a wonderful view from the front porch. Stone for the structure was quarried from the palisades, and the stone mantel was "donkey-hauled" up the cliffs. The trees on the property were cut for the log walls. "Glenmore", the name of the estate, was reached primarily by boat from Fletcher's Boat House. Guests enjoyed horseback riding, parties and oyster roasts.

Elsewhere in Arlington, towns were developing, commerce was progressing. Abingdon, Barcroft, Virginia Highlands, Nauck, Bon Air, High View Park, Hall's Hill, Cherrydale, Clarendon, Ballston, Fort Myers Heights, Rosslyn and other "neighborhoods" were all establishing identities. There were still few "cross county" roads in Arlington, with the "Road to the Falls" (Glebe Road) being the most important. Most homes had no indoor plumbing. Sanitation was achieved through privies; water came from wells, often several blocks away from most homes. Refrigeration was rare, and most lamps still burned kerosene.

Many of the modern conveniences enjoyed by most Arlingtonians today came during the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The "Clean-Up" campaign (a campaign to clean up the politics and some of the more nefarious doings of the area) succeeded by 1903. The first volunteer fire department was established that year. The first road (a portion of Wilson Boulevard) was paved in 1909. Zoning ordinances came into effect in 1914, and the first Boy Scout Troop, the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company, and the Civic Federation were created in 1916 (some documents suggest 1914). The first motorized fire fighting equipment was introduced in 1918, and an Office of Public Health was established in 1919. By 1920, Arlington had been given its official name and the beginnings of its legislative identity. The 1920's and 1930's saw the completion of Arlington National Cemetery, the completion of Key Bridge (1923), the first plumbing ordinance (1925), hook-up to a water source (1926), the completion of Memorial Bridge (1932), the installation of a sewerage system and sewerage treatment plant (1936), completed plans for Arlington Hospital (1938), and the opening of Madison School (1939).

Bellevue Forest was finally ready to emerge from its woodland setting. On December 23, 1938, the Grunwell brothers filed the first section of a plat for the 120-acre subdivision named Bellevue Forest after their family home. John Grunwell played a leading role in the development, bringing to bare his skills as an architect and surveyor.

Bellevue Forest was platted in eighteen sections over a period of twenty years. Similar to many post-Depression, pre-World War II subdivisions, it was planned with broad, curvilinear streets. T-intersections and cul-de-sacs were carefully planned. Lot

sizes were also large, generally between one-third and one-half acre at a time when most construction was built on 5,000 square foot lots. It was designed around its natural setting, with irregularly shaped lots and relatively few sidewalks. Large, mature trees were left standing to insure the feel of "a suburban haven set amidst peaceful natural surroundings".

As was common in Virginia during at least the late 1930's onward, covenants were put in place to "protect" and insure "homogeneity" for the first platted section. There were twenty-one in all (See Appendix IV), and although clear reproductions can no longer be made, they included some of the following prohibitions. There were to be no "use of any temporary structure as a habitation, ...lot-line fences, ...noxious things, ...nuisance to the neighborhood, ...farm animals, ...signs and ...disturbing noise". There were other restrictions against "businesses and manufacturing establishments, public entertainment, schools, dance halls, resorts, and other public facilities." Two covenants prohibited apartments. Another sought to control the appearance of the streetscape. 'No structure shall be built upon or moved onto any lot unless it shall conform to and be in harmony with existing structures in the immediate locality.' The construction or alteration of any structure was likewise regulated:

No building shall be constructed or erected on the above described land and no alteration of any building shall be made unless the specification and plans therefore and the lot plan showing the proposed location of the dwelling and driveways shall be first submitted to the owners of the subdivision aforesaid and approved by them, and no changes shall be made by them without the written consent of said owners, and copies of said lot plan and plans and specifications shall have been lodged permanently with them.

The seventh and 15th covenants set minimum lot sizes, initially of 6,000 square feet and later of 8,000 square feet. The approval of other property owners was required before a lot could be subdivided.

Final mention goes to a covenant typical of the time period, one that "followed national convention by reinforcing racial and ethnic homogeneity and...clearly set aside Bellevue Forest for mainstream, middle-class families:"

Part of our history, part of our past, many of the covenants on the original section of Bellevue Forest expired in 1965.

It is thought that the Grunwells made it a policy to file an additional section of the plat only after the majority of lots in the previous section sold. Two more sections were filed close on the heels of the first; Section Two was filed in 1940 and Section Three in 1941. Altogether, these comprised the first 146 lots in Bellevue Forest. A total of 28 houses were completed before the shortages brought by World War II ground residential construction to a halt.

After the war, the Grunwells formed Bellevue Forest Corporation and hired real estate broker George Mason Green, "a very prominent older gentleman and very well received and liked", as corporation president and exclusive agent. Post-war construction grew gradually. One house was built in 1946; three in 1947; eight in 1948; nine in 1949; 19 in 1950. Construction accelerated rapidly in the 1950's, with 70 houses being built

between 1951 and 1953. The plats for Section Four were filed in 1947 and for Section Five, in 1951 for a total of 199 lots. Covenants for those and all other sections platted after the war were amended to allow "Armenians, Jews, Persians and Syrians" to purchase land. Bellevue Forest Corporation was given decision-making powers previously granted property owners.

The earliest homes built in Bellevue Forest reflected a number of the styles that enjoyed national popularity at that time: English Tudor, English Cottage and Colonial Revival.

Also incorporated into the neighborhood was the relatively rare International Style.

The Art Moderne home of 1940 is another of the interesting styles.

The majority of the homes erected in Bellevue Forest before the war were either story and a-half Minimal Traditional, as shown in this 1940 home,

This Contemporary style Ranch Rambler drew influence from the International style.

Bellevue Forest also has split-foyer homes of a more contemporary vintage.

Beginning in 1954, development patterns changed in Bellevue Forest. Trees were stripped from the lots, and houses with similar facades and plans were built side by side. Nearly 150 of these houses were built between 1954 and 1958. Although they were similar in appearance, they offered the luxuries of the time. Mr. Gene May was the principal builder of many of the homes in Bellevue Forest during the 1950's. It was during this period that Bellevue Forest experienced one of the few documented inconveniences during its development -- the blasting of the area between it and the Potomac River to make way for the completion of the George Washington Parkway.

Not all, however, were of the same style. Both high-style Contemporary or Split-level plans were incorporated into Bellevue Forest.

By 1958, little open land remained in Bellevue Forest. Thirteen houses were constructed between 1959 and 1993. Few vacant lots remain.

Bellevue Forest has changed little over the years. Houses have been enlarged. Homes have been passed down from generation to generation. New families have arrived. A few new styles have been added to the rich architectural panorama. Efforts to depart from single-family homes or to reduce lot size requirements have met with fierce resistance.

In 2003, Bellevue Forest is rich in history and takes great pride and thrives on its natural setting. In many respects, Bellevue Forest has changed little over the millions of years since its natural foundation was laid. It is still hilly, with steep ravines into meandering streams. It is still a forest, and in most cases, houses seem to have been carefully planted among the trees. While many residents of Arlington report seeing deer, foxes, raccoons, opossums, pileated woodpeckers, mice, snakes, and other

wildlife during their walks in our county parks, Bellevue Forest residents routinely see all of these in their own backyards.

It is a neighborhood in which people truly seem to enjoy living.

# CHRONOLOGY OF BELLEVUE FOREST