

# Potomac ALMANAC

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South Glen, Glen and Glen Mill roads, all designated Montgomery County Rustic Roads, meet in Potomac at Watts Branch Creek.

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## Reflecting on Rustic Roads Area roads protected by program are changing despite preservation efforts.

BY PEGGY McEWAN  
THE ALMANAC

**T**he Montgomery County Rustic Roads Advisory Committee in March published “20 Years of Rustic Roads, Status and Reflections on the Montgomery County Rustic Roads Program, 1996 – 2016.”

The report looks back through the 20 years since the program started in 1996 and contains a call to action, warning that, “While the program has proven to be broadly popular, the roads that are protected by the program have been incrementally changing and losing the character that makes them special. The stated purpose of the Rustic roads Program is the preservation of the rustic roads. To accomplish this, the program must be strengthened and it must be supported at the top levels of our county agencies.”

Rustic roads are described by Montgomery Planning as “roads in the Agricultural Reserve or rural parts of Montgomery County that exemplify the rural and agricultural character of the area. Exceptional rustic roads are roads that have such unusual and pleasing character that preservation of these roads is highly desirable.”

**POTOMAC RESIDENTS** don’t have to go far to enjoy the scenic beauty of some of the county’s rustic roads. A part of South Glen Road, Glen Mill Road, Boswell Lane, Glen Road and Stoney Creek Road, all in Potomac are designated Rustic Roads with the section of the Glen Roads where they come together designated as Exceptional



PHOTO BY PEGGY McEWAN/THE ALMANAC

**Three Montgomery County Rustic Roads meet in Potomac at Watts Branch Creek.**

Rustic Roads.

The program is broadly supported by county residents, but there are problems, according to the report. Those include road closures, “unsympathetic” bridge replacement, changing pavement materials and road widenings. In order to maintain Rustic Road designation, roads need to keep their original look and feel.

“There was a reason these roads were included,” Caroline Taylor, executive director of Montgomery Countryside Alliance said. “They are part of the experience of getting to the Agricultural Reserve.”

Taylor emphasized the importance of balance when it comes to maintaining Rural

Roads and safety.

“Public education is part of it,” she said. “They are narrower roads, some are gravel and drivers may encounter farm equipment on them. These are things to watch.”

Another negative impacting the Rural Roads program, according to the report is that its administration has been “notably weak.” “The County Code needs to be updated to support the committee and to improve coordination between agencies. The Executive regulation needs to be up-

**Published in March 2017, “20 Years of Rustic Roads, Status and Reflections on the Montgomery County Rustic Roads Program, 1996 – 2016” is available online.**



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dated to fully support the preservation intent of the program and reflect the County road Code provisions for Context Sensitive Design,” the report says.

In order to assure the program continues as a way to support the County’s agricultural, historic and scenic areas, the report makes eight recommendations ranging from a renewed commitment to the preservation of the designated roads,

to “Clear and full support from our top County officials and agencies down to the boots on the ground staff.”

“We applaud the efforts of the rural roads Advisory Committee in putting together this report,” Taylor said. “Most importantly the imperative of additional work.

We think the Rural Roads Advisory Committee should be given more strength...we are hoping the county will embrace the difference of protecting the country roads differently from regular county roads.”

The report contains many beautiful photos of Montgomery County rural roads and can be read through the Montgomery County Planning website: [montgomeryplanning.org](http://montgomeryplanning.org).

## Fire Destroys Apartments

Community rallies to support families after Congressional Country Club fire.

BY PEGGY McEWAN  
THE ALMANAC

**T**hree families were burned out of their home Saturday, April 1, when a fire ignited at a house on the property of Congressional Country Club in Bethesda. The large house had been divided into three apartments and all were damaged by the fire. Neighbors and friends of the families are collecting money and gift cards to help them start over.

Ricardo and Mimi Quijada and their two sons, Ricardo, a fifth grader at Carderock Springs Elementary School, and Diego, a seventh grader at Thomas W. Pyle Middle School, are one of the families affected by the fire. They also have a daughter away at

the University of Alabama. “The house is unlivable,” Ricardo Quijada said. “We are staying with friends, obviously good friends.”

Quijada said Congressional Country Club has been very supportive and his family will move into a different house on the club property as soon as it is ready for them. When that happens the family will need to replace all its furniture and kitchen utensils. No one was at home when the fire started so there were no human injuries but a dog died as a result of smoke inhalation, Pete Piringer, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue spokesperson, said. “The dog was a geese chaser ‘employed’ by Congressional Country Club,” Quijada said. “He lived with one of the families in the house.”

Piringer said the fire was “pretty significant” with about 60 responders from Fire and Rescue helping to put it out. He estimates damages to the house to be about \$200,000.

“A neighbor saw the fire and called 911,” he said. “Then he grabbed a garden hose and tried to put it out. He helped keep it from spreading, we credit him with that.”



PHOTO BY PETE PIRINGER/MCFRS

**Ten people were displaced and a dog died due to a residential fire at the Congressional Country Club on April 1.**

The cause of the fire is still under investigation, but Piringer said it is believed to be accidental, possibly a spontaneous reaction.

Neighbors and community members can help by dropping off money or gift cards at the home of Michelle and Steve Murphy, 7424 Brickyard Road, Potomac. Checks should be made out to Ricardo and Mimi Quijada. Contributions can also be mailed to The Club Foundation, Congressional

Country Club, 8500 River Road, Bethesda, 20817.

“The family has been overwhelmed by the community’s efforts to support them,” Michelle Murphy wrote in an email. “I have received countless emails from Mimi to say how she can never repay people for their kindness, but asked me to spread the word that they are sincerely thankful for the donations and kindness.”